ALL SHAKESPEARE'S TALES

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"THE DAY WAS BREAKING WHEN THEY PARTED"—*Page 217*

ALL
SHAKESPEARE'S
TALES

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE BY
CHARLES AND MARY LAMB
AND
TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE BY
CLAYTON EDWARDS

ILLUSTRATED BY
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TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE

BY

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE

THE TEMPEST

THERE was a certain island in the sea, the only inhabitants of which were an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady. She came to this island so young, that she had no memory of having seen any other human face than her father's.

They lived in a cave or cell, made out of a rock; it was divided into several apartments, one of which Prospero called his study; there he kept his books, which chiefly treated of magic, a study at that time much affected by all learned men: and the knowledge of this art he found very useful to him; for being thrown by a strange chance upon this island, which had been enchanted by a witch called Sycorax, who died there a short time before his arrival, Prospero, by virtue of his art, released many good spirits that Sycorax had imprisoned in the bodies of large trees, because they had refused to execute her wicked commands. These gentle spirits were ever after obedient to the will of Prospero. Of these Ariel was the chief.

The lively little sprite Ariel had nothing mischievous in his nature, except that he took rather too much pleasure in tormenting an ugly monster called Caliban, for he owed him a grudge because he was the son of his old enemy Sycorax. This Caliban, Prospero found in the woods, a strange misshapen thing, far less human in form than an ape: he took him home to his cell, and taught him to speak; and Prospero would have been very kind to him, but the bad nature which Caliban inherited from his mother Sycorax, would not let him learn anything good or useful: therefore he was employed like a slave, to fetch wood, and do the most laborious offices; and Ariel had the charge of compelling him to these services.

When Caliban was lazy and neglected his work, Ariel (who was invisible to all eyes but Prospero's) would come slily and pinch him, and sometimes tumble him down in the mire; and then Ariel, in the likeness of an ape, would make mouths at him. Then swiftly changing his shape, in the likeness of a hedgehog, he would lie tumbling in Caliban's way, who feared the hedgehog's sharp quills would prick his bare feet. With a variety of such-like vexatious tricks Ariel would often torment him, whenever Caliban neglected the work which Prospero commanded him to do.

Having these powerful spirits obedient to his will, Prospero could by their means command the winds, and the waves of the sea. By his orders they raised a violent storm, in the midst of which, and struggling with the wild sea-waves that every moment threatened to swallow it up, he showed his daughter a fine large ship, which he told her was full of living beings like themselves. "O my dear father," said she, "if by your art you have raised this dreadful storm, have pity on their sad distress. See! the vessel will be dashed to pieces. Poor souls! they will all perish. If I had power, I would sink the sea beneath the earth, rather than the good ship should be destroyed, with all the precious souls within her."

"Be not so amazed, daughter Miranda," said Prospero; "there is no harm done. I have so ordered it, that no person in the ship shall receive any hurt. What I have done has been in care of you, my dear child. You are ignorant who you are, or where you came from, and you know no more of me, but that I am your father, and live in this poor cave. Can you remember a time before you came to this cell? I think you cannot, for you were not then three years of age."

"Certainly I can, sir," replied Miranda.

"By what?" asked Prospero; "by any other house or person? Tell me what you can remember, my child."

Miranda said, "It seems to me like the recollection of a dream. But had I not once four or five women who attended upon me?"

Prospero answered, "You had, and more. How is it that this still lives in your mind? Do you remember how you came here?"

"No, sir," said Miranda, "I remember nothing more."

"Twelve years ago, Miranda," continued Prospero, "I was duke of Milan, and you were a princess, and my only heir. I had a younger brother, whose name was Antonio, to whom I trusted everything; and as I was fond of retirement and deep study, I commonly left the management of my state affairs to your uncle, my false brother (for so indeed he proved). I, neglecting all worldly ends, buried among my books, did dedicate my whole time to the bettering of my mind. My brother Antonio being thus in possession of my power, began to think himself the duke indeed. The opportunity I gave him of making himself popular among my subjects awakened in his bad nature a proud ambition to deprive me of my dukedom: this he soon effected with the aid of the king of Naples, a powerful prince, who was my enemy."

"Wherefore," said Miranda, "did they not that hour destroy us?"

"My child," answered her father, "they durst not, so dear was the love that my people bore me. Antonio carried us on board a ship, and when we were some leagues out at sea, he forced us into a small boat, without either tackle, sail, or mast: there he left us, as he thought, to perish. But a kind lord of my court, one Gonzalo, who loved me, had privately placed in the boat, water, provisions, apparel, and some books which I prize above my dukedom."

"O my father," said Miranda, "what a trouble must I have been to you then!"

"No, my love," said Prospero, "you were a little cherub that did preserve me. Your innocent smiles made me bear up against my misfortunes. Our food lasted till we landed on this desert island, since when my chief delight has been in teaching you, Miranda, and well have you profited by my instructions."

"Heaven thank you, my dear father," said Miranda. "Now pray tell me, sir, your reason for raising this sea-storm?"

"Know then," said her father, "that by means of this storm, my enemies, the king of Naples, and my cruel brother, are cast ashore upon this island."

Having so said, Prospero gently touched his daughter with his magic wand, and she fell fast asleep; for the spirit Ariel just then presented himself before his master, to give an account of the tempest, and how he had disposed of the ship's company, and though the spirits were always invisible to Miranda, Prospero did not choose she should hear him holding converse (as would seem to her) with the empty air.

"Well, my brave spirit," said Prospero to Ariel, "how have you performed your task?"

Ariel gave a lively description of the storm, and of the terrors of the mariners; and how the king's son, Ferdinand, was the first who leaped into the sea; and his father thought he saw his dear son swallowed up by the waves and lost. "But he is safe," said Ariel, "in a corner of the isle, sitting with his arms folded, sadly lamenting the loss of the king, his father, whom he concludes drowned. Not a hair of his head is injured, and his princely garments, though drenched in the sea-waves, look fresher than before."

"That's my delicate Ariel," said Prospero. "Bring him hither: my daughter must see this young prince. Where is the king, and my brother?"

"I left them," answered Ariel, "searching for Ferdinand, whom they have little hopes of finding, thinking they saw him perish. Of the ship's crew not one is missing; though each one thinks himself the only one saved: and the ship, though invisible to them, is safe in the harbour."

"Ariel," said Prospero, "thy charge is faithfully performed: but there is more work yet."

"Is there more work?" said Ariel. "Let me remind you, master, you have promised me my liberty. I pray, remember, I have done you worthy service, told you no lies, made no mistakes, served you without grudge or grumbling."

"How now!" said Prospero. "You do not recollect what a torment I freed you from. Have you forgot the wicked witch Sycorax, who with age and envy was almost bent double? Where was she born? Speak; tell me."

"Sir, in Algiers," said Ariel.

"O was she so?" said Prospero. "I must recount what you have been, which I find you do not remember. This bad witch, Sycorax, for her witchcrafts, too terrible to enter human hearing, was banished from Algiers, and here left by the sailors; and because you were a spirit too delicate to execute her wicked commands, she shut you up in a tree, where I found you howling. This torment, remember, I did free you from."

"Pardon me, dear master," said Ariel, ashamed to seem ungrateful; "I will obey your commands."

"Do so," said Prospero, "and I will set you free." He then gave orders what further he would have him do; and away went Ariel, first to where he had left Ferdinand, and found him still sitting on the grass in the same melancholy posture.

"O my young gentleman," said Ariel, when he saw him, "I will soon move you. You must be brought, I find, for the Lady Miranda to have a sight of your pretty person. Come, sir, follow me." He then began singing,

"Full fathom five thy father lies:
  Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
  Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them,— Ding-dong, bell."

This strange news of his lost father soon roused the prince from the stupid fit into which he had fallen. He followed in amazement the sound of Ariel's voice, till it led him to Prospero and Miranda, who were sitting under the shade of a large tree. Now Miranda had never seen a man before, except her own father.

"Miranda," said Prospero, "tell me what you are looking at yonder."

"O father," said Miranda, in a strange surprise, "surely that is a spirit. Lord! how it looks about! Believe me, sir, it is a beautiful creature. Is it not a spirit?"

"No, girl," answered her father; "it eats, and sleeps, and has senses such as we have. This young man you see was in the ship. He is somewhat altered by grief, or you might call him a handsome person. He has lost his companions, and is wandering about to find them."

Miranda, who thought all men had grave faces and grey beards like her father, was delighted with the appearance of this beautiful young prince; and Ferdinand, seeing such a lovely lady in this desert place, and from the strange sounds he had heard, expecting nothing but wonders, thought he was upon an enchanted island, and that Miranda was the goddess of the place, and as such he began to address her.

She timidly answered, she was no goddess, but a simple maid, and was going to give him an account of herself, when Prospero interrupted her. He was well pleased to find they admired each other, for he plainly perceived they had (as we say) fallen in love at first sight: but to try Ferdinand's constancy, he resolved to throw some difficulties in their way: therefore advancing forward, he addressed the prince with a stern air, telling him, he came to the island as a spy, to take it from him who was the lord of it. "Follow me," said he, "I will tie you neck and feet together. You shall drink sea-water; shell-fish, withered roots, and husks of acorns shall be your food." "No," said Ferdinand, "I will resist such entertainment, till I see a more powerful enemy," and drew his sword; but Prospero, waving his magic wand, fixed him to the spot where he stood, so that he had no power to move.

Miranda hung upon her father, saying, " Why are you so ungentle? Have pity, sir; I will be his surety. This is the second man I ever saw, and to me he seems a true one."

" Silence," said the father: " one word more will make me chide you, girl! What! an advocate for an impostor! You think there are no more such fine men, having seen only him and Caliban. I tell you, foolish girl, most men as far excel this, as he does Caliban." This he said to prove his daughter's constancy; and she replied, " My affections are most humble. I have no wish to see a goodlier man."

" Come on, young man," said Prospero to the prince; " you have no power to disobey me."

" I have not, indeed," answered Ferdinand; and not knowing that it was by magic he was deprived of all power of resistance, he was astonished to find himself so strangely compelled to follow Prospero: looking back on Miranda as long as he could see her, he said, as he went after Prospero into the cave, " My spirits are all bound up, as if I were in a dream; but this man's threats, and the weakness which I feel, would seem light to me if from my prison I might once a day behold this fair maid."

Prospero kept Ferdinand not long confined within the cell: he soon brought out his prisoner, and set him a severe task to perform, taking care to let his daughter know the hard labour he had imposed on him, and then pretending to go into his study, he secretly watched them both.

Prospero had commanded Ferdinand to pile up some heavy logs of wood. Kings' sons not being much used to laborious work, Miranda soon after found her lover almost dying with fatigue. " Alas! " said she, " do not work so hard; my father is at his studies, he is safe for these three hours; pray rest yourself."

" O my dear lady," said Ferdinand, " I dare not. I must finish my task before I take my rest."

" If you will sit down," said Miranda, " I will carry your logs the while." But this Ferdinand would by no means agree to.

Instead of a help Miranda became a hindrance, for they began a long conversation, so that the business of log-carrying went on very slowly.

Prospero, who had enjoined Ferdinand this task merely as a trial of his love, was not at his books, as his daughter supposed, but was standing by them invisible, to overhear what they said.

Ferdinand inquired her name, which she told, saying it was against her father's express command she did so.

Prospero only smiled at this first instance of his daughter's disobedience, for having by his magic art caused his daughter to fall in love so suddenly, he was not angry that she showed her love by forgetting to obey his commands. And he listened well pleased to a long speech of Ferdinand's, in which he professed to love her above all the ladies he ever saw.

In answer to his praises of her beauty, which he said exceeded all the women in the world, she replied, "I do not remember the face of any woman, nor have I seen any more men than you, my good friend, and my dear father. How features are abroad, I know not; but, believe me, sir, I would not wish any companion in the world but you, nor can my imagination form any shape but yours that I could like. But, sir, I fear I talk to you too freely, and my father's precepts I forget."

At this Prospero smiled, and nodded his head, as much as to say, "This goes on exactly as I could wish; my girl will be queen of Naples."

And then Ferdinand, in another fine long speech (for young princes speak in courtly phrases), told the innocent Miranda he was heir to the crown of Naples, and that she should be his queen.

"Ah! sir," said she, "I am a fool to weep at what I am glad of. I will answer you in plain and holy innocence. I am your wife if you will marry me."

Prospero prevented Ferdinand's thanks by appearing visible before them.

"Fear nothing, my child," said he; "I have overheard, and approve of all you have said. And, Ferdinand, if I have too severely used you, I will make you rich amends, by giving you my daughter. All your vexations were but trials of your love, and you have nobly stood the test. Then as my gift, which your true love has worthily purchased, take my daughter, and do not smile that I boast she is above all praise." He then, telling them that he had business which required his presence, desired they would sit down and talk together till he returned; and this command Miranda seemed not at all disposed to disobey.

When Prospero left them, he called his spirit Ariel, who quickly appeared before him, eager to relate what he had done with Prospero's brother and the king of Naples. Ariel said he had left them almost out of their senses with fear, at the strange things he had caused them to see and hear. When fatigued with wandering about, and famished for want of food, he had suddenly set before them a delicious banquet, and then, just as they were going to eat, he appeared visible before them in the shape of a harpy, a voracious monster with wings, and the feast vanished away. Then, to their utter amazement, this seeming harpy spoke to them, reminding them of their cruelty in driving Prospero from his dukedom, and leaving him and his infant daughter to perish in the sea; saying, that for this cause these terrors were suffered to afflict them.

The king of Naples, and Antonio the false brother, repented the injustice they had done to Prospero; and Ariel told his master he was certain their penitence was sincere, and that he, though a spirit, could not but pity them.

"Then bring them hither, Ariel," said Prospero: "if you, who are but a spirit, feel for their distress, shall not I, who am a human being like themselves, have compassion on them? Bring them, quickly, my dainty Ariel."

Ariel soon returned with the king, Antonio, and old Gonzalo in their train, who had followed him, wondering at the wild music he played in the air to draw them on to his master's presence. This Gonzalo was the same who had so kindly provided Prospero formerly with books and provisions, when his wicked brother left him, as he thought, to perish in an open boat in the sea.

Grief and terror had so stupefied their senses, that they did not know Prospero. He first discovered himself to the good old Gonzalo, calling him the preserver of his life; and then his brother and the king knew that he was the injured Prospero.

Antonio with tears, and sad words of sorrow and true repentance, implored his brother's forgiveness, and the king expressed his sincere remorse for having assisted Antonio to depose his brother: and Prospero forgave them; and, upon their engaging to restore his dukedom, he said to the king of Naples, "I have a gift in store for you too;" and opening a door, showed him his son Ferdinand playing at chess with Miranda.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the father and the son at this unexpected meeting, for they each thought the other drowned in the storm.

"O wonder!" said Miranda, "what noble creatures these are! It must surely be a brave world that has such people in it."

The king of Naples was almost as much astonished at the beauty and excellent graces of the young Miranda, as his son had been. "Who is this maid?" said he; "she seems the goddess that has parted us, and brought us thus together." "No, sir," answered Ferdinand, smiling to find his father had fallen into the same mistake that he had done when he first saw Miranda, "she is a mortal, but by immortal Providence she is mine; I chose her when I could not ask you, my father, for your consent, not thinking you were alive. She is the daughter to this Prospero, who is the famous duke of Milan, of whose renown I have heard so much, but never saw him till now: of him I have received a new life: he has made himself to me a second father, giving me this dear lady."

"Then I must be her father," said the king; "but oh! how oddly will it sound, that I must ask my child forgiveness."

"No more of that," said Prospero: "let us not remember our troubles past, since they so happily have ended." And then Prospero embraced his brother, and again assured him of his forgiveness; and said that a wise over-ruling Providence had permitted that he should be driven from his poor dukedom of Milan, that his daughter might inherit the crown of Naples, for that by their meeting in this desert island, it had happened that the king's son had loved Miranda.

These kind words which Prospero spoke, meaning to comfort his brother, so filled Antonio with shame and remorse, that he wept and was unable to speak; and the kind old Gonzalo wept to see this joyful reconciliation, and prayed for blessings on the young couple.

Prospero now told them that their ship was safe in the harbour, and the sailors all on board her, and that he and his daughter would accompany them home the next morning. "In the meantime," says he, "partake of such refreshments as my poor cave affords; and for your evening's entertainment I will relate the history of my life from my first landing in this desert island." He then called for Caliban to prepare some food, and set the cave in order; and the company were astonished at the uncouth form and savage appearance of this ugly monster, who (Prospero said) was the only attendant he had to wait upon him.

Before Prospero left the island, he dismissed Ariel from his service, to the great joy of that lively little spirit; who, though he had been a faithful servant to his master, was always longing to enjoy his free liberty, to wander uncontrolled in the air, like a wild bird, under green trees, among pleasant fruits, and sweet-smelling flowers. "My quaint Ariel," said Prospero to the little sprite when he made him free, "I shall miss you; yet you shall have your freedom." "Thank you, my dear master," said Ariel; "but give me leave to attend your ship home with prosperous gales, before you bid farewell to the assistance of your faithful spirit; and then, master, when I am free, how merrily I shall live!" Here Ariel sung this pretty song:

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I crouch when owls do cry
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

Prospero then buried deep in the earth his magical books and wand, for he was resolved never more to make use of the magic art. And having thus overcome his enemies, and being reconciled to his brother and the king of Naples, nothing now remained to complete his happiness, but to revisit his native land, to take possession of his dukedom, and to witness the happy nuptials of his daughter and Prince Ferdinand, which the king said should be instantly celebrated with great splendour on their return to Naples. At which place, under the safe convoy of the spirit Ariel, they, after a pleasant voyage, soon arrived.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

THERE was a law in the city of Athens which gave to its citizens the power of compelling their daughters to marry whomsoever they pleased; for upon a daughter's refusing to marry the man her father had chosen to be her husband, the father was empowered by this law to cause her to be put to death; but as fathers do not often desire the death of their own daughters, even though they do happen to prove a little refractory, this law was seldom or never put in execution, though perhaps the young ladies of that city were not unfrequently threatened by their parents with the terrors of it.

There was one instance, however, of an old man, whose name was Egeus, who actually did come before Theseus (at that time the reigning duke of Athens), to complain that his daughter Hermia, whom he had commanded to marry Demetrius, a young man of a noble Athenian family, refused to obey him, because she loved another young Athenian, named Lysander. Egeus demanded justice of Theseus, and desired that this cruel law might be put in force against his daughter.

Hermia pleaded in excuse for her disobedience, that Demetrius had formerly professed love for her dear friend Helena, and that Helena loved Demetrius to distraction; but this honourable reason, which Hermia gave for not obeying her father's command, moved not the stern Egeus.

Theseus, though a great and merciful prince, had no power to alter the laws of his country; therefore he could only give Hermia four days to consider of it: and at the end of that time, if she still refused to marry Demetrius, she was to be put to death.

When Hermia was dismissed from the presence of the duke, she went to her lover Lysander, and told him the peril she was in, and that she must either give him up and marry Demetrius, or lose her life in four days.

Lysander was in great affliction at hearing these evil tidings; but recollecting that he had an aunt who lived at some distance from Athens, and that at the place where she lived the cruel law could not be put in force against Hermia (this law not extending beyond the boundaries of the city), he proposed to Hermia that she should steal out of her father's house that night, and go with him to his aunt's house, where he would marry her. "I will meet you," said Lysander, "in the wood, a few miles without the city; in that delightful wood, where we have so often walked with Helena in the pleasant month of May."

To this proposal Hermia joyfully agreed; and she told no one of her intended flight but her friend Helena. Helena (as maidens will do foolish things for love) very ungenerously resolved to go and tell this to Demetrius, though she could hope no benefit from betraying her friend's secret, but the poor pleasure of following her faithless lover to the wood; for she well knew that Demetrius would go thither in pursuit of Hermia.

The wood, in which Lysander and Hermia proposed to meet, was the favourite haunt of those little beings known by the name of *Fairies*.

Oberon the king, and Titania the queen of the Fairies, with all their tiny train of followers, in this wood held their midnight revels.

Between this little king and queen of sprites there happened, at this time, a sad disagreement; they never met by moonlight in the shady walks of this pleasant wood, but they were quarrelling, till all their fairy elves would creep into acorn-cups and hide themselves for fear.

The cause of this unhappy disagreement was Titania's refusing to give Oberon a little changeling boy, whose mother had been Titania's friend; and upon her death the fairy queen stole the child from its nurse, and brought him up in the woods.

The night on which the lovers were to meet in this wood, as

Titania was walking with some of her maids of honour, she met Oberon attended by his train of fairy courtiers.

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania," said the fairy king. The queen replied, "What, jealous Oberon, is it you? Fairies, skip hence; I have forsworn his company." "Tarry, rash fairy," said Oberon; "am not I thy lord? Why does Titania cross her Oberon? Give me your little changeling boy to be my page."

"Set your heart at rest," answered the queen; "your whole fairy kingdom buys not the boy of me." She then left her lord in great anger. "Well, go your way," said Oberon: "before the morning dawns I will torment you for this injury."

Oberon then sent for Puck, his chief favourite and privy counsellor.

Puck (or as he was sometimes called, Robin Goodfellow), was a shrewd and knavish sprite, that used to play comical pranks in the neighbouring villages; sometimes getting into the dairies and skimming the milk, sometimes plunging his light and airy form into the butter-churn, and while he was dancing his fantastic shape in the churn, in vain the dairy-maid would labour to change her cream into butter: nor had the village swains any better success; whenever Puck chose to play his freaks in the brewing copper, the ale was sure to be spoiled. When a few good neighbours were met to drink some comfortable ale together, Puck would jump into the bowl of ale in the likeness of a roasted crab, and when some old goody was going to drink he would bob against her lips, and spill the ale over her withered chin; and presently after, when the same old dame was gravely seating herself to tell her neighbours a sad and melancholy story, Puck would slip her three-legged stool from under her, and down toppled the poor old woman, and then the old gossips would hold their sides and laugh at her, and swear they never wasted a merrier hour.

"Come hither, Puck," said Oberon to this little merry wanderer of the night; "fetch me the flower which maids call *Love in Idleness;* the juice of that little purple flower laid on the eyelids of those who sleep, will make them, when they awake, dote on the first thing they see. Some of the juice of that flower I will drop on the eyelids of my Titania when she is asleep; and the first thing she looks upon when she opens her eyes she will fall in love with, even though it be a lion or a bear, a meddling monkey, or a busy ape; and before I will take this charm from off her sight, which I can do with another charm I know of, I will make her give me that boy to be my page."

Puck, who loved mischief to his heart, was highly diverted with this intended frolic of his master, and ran to seek the flower; and while Oberon was waiting the return of Puck, he observed Demetrius and Helena enter the wood: he overheard Demetrius reproaching Helena for following him, and after many unkind words on his part, and gentle expostulations from Helena, reminding him of his former love and professions of true faith to her, he left her (as he said) to the mercy of the wild beasts, and she ran after him as swiftly as she could.

The fairy king, who was always friendly to true lovers, felt great compassion for Helena; and perhaps, as Lysander said they used to walk by moonlight in this pleasant wood, Oberon might have seen Helena in those happy times when she was beloved by Demetrius. However that might be, when Puck returned with the little purple flower, Oberon said to his favourite, "Take a part of this flower; there has been a sweet Athenian lady here, who is in love with a disdainful youth; if you find him sleeping, drop some of the love-juice in his eyes, but contrive to do it when she is near him, that the first thing he sees when he awakes may be this despised lady. You will know the man by the Athenian garments which he wears." Puck promised to manage this matter very dexterously: and then Oberon went, unperceived by Titania, to her bower, where she was preparing to go to rest. Her fairy bower was a bank, where grew wild thyme, cowslips, and sweet violets, under a canopy of wood-bine, musk-roses, and eglantine. There Titania always slept some part of the night; her coverlet the enamelled skin of a snake, which, though a small mantle, was wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

He found Titania giving orders to her fairies, how they were to employ themselves while she slept. "Some of you," said her majesty, "must kill cankers in the musk-rose buds, and some wage war with the bats for their leathern wings, to make my small elves coats; and some of you keep watch that the clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, come not near me: but first sing me to sleep." Then they began to sing this song:—

"You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong,
Come not near our Fairy Queen.
Philomel, with melody,
Sing in your sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night with lullaby."

When the fairies had sung their queen asleep with this pretty lullaby, they left her to perform the important services she had enjoined them. Oberon then softly drew near his Titania, and dropped some of the love-juice on her eyelids, saying,—

"What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take."

But to return to Hermia, who made her escape out of her father's house that night, to avoid the death she was doomed to for refusing to marry Demetrius. When she entered the wood, she found her dear Lysander waiting for her, to conduct her to his aunt's house; but before they had passed half through the wood, Hermia was so much fatigued, that Lysander, who was very careful of this dear lady, who had proved her affection for him even by hazarding her life for his sake, persuaded her to rest till morning on a bank of soft moss, and lying down himself on the ground at some little distance, they soon fell fast asleep. Here they were found by Puck, who, seeing a handsome young man asleep, and perceiving that his clothes were made in the Athenian fashion, and that a pretty lady was sleeping near him, concluded that this must be the Athenian maid and her disdainful lover whom Oberon had sent him to seek; and he naturally enough conjectured that, as they were alone together, she must be the first thing he would see when he awoke; so, without more ado, he proceeded to pour some of the juice of the little purple flower into his eyes. But it so fell out, that Helena came that way, and, instead of Hermia, was the first object Lysander beheld when he opened his eyes; and strange to relate, so powerful was the love-charm, all his love for Hermia vanished away, and Lysander fell in love with Helena.

Had he first seen Hermia when he awoke, the blunder Puck committed would have been of no consequence, for he could not love that faithful lady too well; but for poor Lysander to be forced by a fairy love-charm to forget his own true Hermia, and to run after another lady, and leave Hermia asleep quite alone in a wood at midnight, was a sad chance indeed.

Thus this misfortune happened. Helena, as has been before related, endeavoured to keep pace with Demetrius when he ran away so rudely from her; but she could not continue this unequal race long, men being always better runners in a long race than ladies. Helena soon lost sight of Demetrius; and as she was wandering about, dejected and forlorn, she arrived at the place where Lysander was sleeping. "Ah!" said she, "this is Lysander lying on the ground: is he dead or asleep?" Then, gently touching him, she said, "Good sir, if you are alive, awake." Upon this Lysander opened his eyes, and (the love-charm beginning to work) immediately addressed her in terms of extravagant love and admiration; telling her she as much excelled Hermia in beauty as a dove does a raven, and that he would run through fire for her sweet sake; and many more such lover-like speeches. Helena, knowing

Lysander was her friend Hermia's lover, and that he was solemnly engaged to marry her, was in the utmost rage when she heard herself addressed in this manner; for she thought (as well she might) that Lysander was making a jest of her. "Oh!" said she, "why was I born to be mocked and scorned by every one? Is it not enough, is it not enough, young man, that I can never get a sweet look or a kind word from Demetrius; but you, sir, must pretend in this disdainful manner to court me? I thought, Lysander, you were a lord of more true gentleness." Saying these words in great anger, she ran away; and Lysander followed her, quite forgetful of his own Hermia, who was still asleep.

When Hermia awoke, she was in a sad fright at finding herself alone. She wandered about the wood, not knowing what was become of Lysander, or which way to go to seek for him. In the meantime Demetrius not being able to find Hermia and his rival Lysander, and fatigued with his fruitless search, was observed by Oberon fast asleep. Oberon had learnt by some questions he had asked of Puck, that he had applied the love-charm to the wrong person's eyes; and now having found the person first intended, he touched the eyelids of the sleeping Demetrius with the love-juice, and he instantly awoke; and the first thing he saw being Helena, he, as Lysander had done before, began to address love-speeches to her; and just at that moment Lysander, followed by Hermia (for through Puck's unlucky mistake it was now become Hermia's turn to run after her lover) made his appearance; and then Lysander and Demetrius, both speaking together, made love to Helena, they being each one under the influence of the same potent charm.

The astonished Helena thought that Demetrius, Lysander, and her once dear friend Hermia, were all in a plot together to make a jest of her.

Hermia was as much surprised as Helena: she knew not why Lysander and Demetrius, who both before loved her, were now become the lovers of Helena; and to Hermia the matter seemed to be no jest.

The ladies, who before had always been the dearest of friends, now fell to high words together.

"Unkind Hermia," said Helena, "it is you have set Lysander on to vex me with mock praises; and your other lover Demetrius, who used almost to spurn me with his foot, have you not bid him call me goddess, nymph, rare, precious, and celestial? He would not speak thus to me, whom he hates, if you did not set him on to make a jest of me. Unkind Hermia, to join with men in scorning your poor friend. Have you forgot our school-day friendship? How often, Hermia, have we two, sitting on one cushion, both singing one song, with our needles working the same flower, both on the same sampler wrought; growing up together in fashion of a double cherry, scarcely seeming parted! Hermia, it is not friendly in you, it is not maidenly to join with men in scorning your poor friend."

"I am amazed at your passionate words," said Hermia: "I scorn you not; it seems you scorn me." "Ay, do," returned Helena, "persevere, counterfeit serious looks, and make mouths at me when I turn my back; then wink at each other, and hold the sweet jest up. If you had any pity, grace, or manners, you would not use me thus."

While Helena and Hermia were speaking these angry words to each other, Demetrius and Lysander left them, to fight together in the wood for the love of Helena.

When they found the gentlemen had left them, they departed, and once more wandered weary in the wood in search of their lovers.

As soon as they were gone, the fairy king, who with little Puck had been listening to their quarrels, said to him, "This is your negligence, Puck; or did you do this wilfully?" "Believe me, king of shadows," answered Puck, "it was a mistake; did not you tell me I should know the man by his Athenian garments? However, I am not sorry this has happened, for I think their jangling makes excellent sport." "You heard," said Oberon, "that Demetrius and Lysander are gone to seek a convenient place to fight in. I command you to overhang the night with a thick fog, and lead these quarrelsome lovers so astray in the dark, that they shall not be able to find each other. Counterfeit each of their voices to the other, and with bitter taunts provoke them to follow you, while they think it is their rival's tongue they hear. See you do this, till they are so weary they can go no farther; and when you find they are asleep, drop the juice of this other flower into Lysander's eyes, and when he awakes he will forget his new love for Helena, and return to his old passion for Hermia; and then the two fair ladies may each one be happy with the man she loves, and they will think all that has passed a vexatious dream. About this quickly, Puck, and I will go and see what sweet love my Titania has found."

Titania was still sleeping, and Oberon seeing a clown near her, who had lost his way in the wood, and was likewise asleep: "This fellow," said he, "shall be my Titania's true love"; and clapping an ass's head over the clown's, it seemed to fit him as well as if it had grown upon his own shoulders. Though Oberon fixed the ass's head on very gently, it awakened him, and rising up, unconscious of what Oberon had done to him, he went towards the bower where the fairy queen slept.

"Ah! what angel is that I see?" said Titania, opening her eyes, and the juice of the little purple flower beginning to take effect: "are you as wise as you are beautiful?"

"Why, mistress," said the foolish clown, "if I have wit enough to find the way out of this wood, I have enough to serve my turn."

"Out of the wood do not desire to go," said the enamoured queen. "I am a spirit of no common rate. I love you. Go with me, and I will give you fairies to attend upon you."

She then called four of her fairies: their names were, Pease-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed.

"Attend," said the queen, "upon this sweet gentleman; hop in his walks, and gambol in his sight; feed him with grapes and apricots, and steal for him the honey-bags from the bees. Come, sit with me," said she to the clown, " and let me play with your amiable hairy cheeks, my beautiful ass! and kiss your fair large ears, my gentle joy!"

" Where is Pease-blossom?" said the ass-headed clown, not much regarding the fairy queen's courtship, but very proud of his new attendants.

" Here, sir," said little Pease-blossom.

" Scratch my head," said the clown. " Where is Cobweb?"

" Here, sir," said Cobweb.

" Good Mr. Cobweb," said the foolish clown, " kill me the red humble bee on the top of that thistle yonder; and, good Mr. Cobweb, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, Mr. Cobweb, and take care the honey-bag break not; I should be sorry to have you overflown with a honey-bag. Where is Mustard-seed?"

" Here, sir," said Mustard-seed: " what is your will?"

" Nothing," said the clown, " good Mr. Mustard-seed, but to help Mr. Pease-blossom to scratch; I must go to a barber's, Mr. Mustard-seed, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face."

" My sweet love," said the queen, " what will you have to eat? I have a venturous fairy shall seek the squirrel's hoard, and fetch you some new nuts."

" I had rather have a handful of dried pease," said the clown, who with his ass's head had got an ass's appetite. " But, I pray, let none of your people disturb me, for I have a mind to sleep."

" Sleep, then," said the queen, " and I will wind you in my arms. O how I love you! how I dote upon you!"

When the fairy king saw the clown sleeping in the arms of his queen, he advanced within her sight, and reproached her with having lavished her favours upon an ass.

This she could not deny, as the clown was then sleeping within her arms, with his ass's head crowned by her with flowers.

When Oberon had teased her for some time, he again demanded the changeling boy; which she, ashamed of being discovered by her lord with her new favourite, did not dare to refuse him.

Oberon, having thus obtained the little boy he had so long wished for to be his page, took pity on the disgraceful situation into which, by his merry contrivance, he had brought his Titania, and threw some of the juice of the other flower into her eyes; and the fairy queen immediately recovered her senses, and wondered at her late dotage, saying how she now loathed the sight of the strange monster.

Oberon likewise took the ass's head from off the clown, and left him to finish his nap with his own fool's head upon his shoulders.

Oberon and his Titania being now perfectly reconciled, he related to her the history of the lovers, and their midnight quarrels; and she agreed to go with him and see the end of their adventures.

The fairy king and queen found the lovers and their fair ladies, at no great distance from each other, sleeping on a grass-plot; for Puck, to make amends for his former mistake, had contrived with the utmost diligence to bring them all to the same spot, unknown to each other; and he had carefully removed the charm from off the eyes of Lysander with the antidote the fairy king gave to him.

Hermia first awoke, and finding her lost Lysander asleep so near her, was looking at him and wondering at his strange inconstancy. Lysander presently opening his eyes, and seeing his dear Hermia, recovered his reason which the fairy charm had before clouded, and with his reason, his love for Hermia; and they began to talk over the adventures of the night, doubting if these things had really happened, or if they had both been dreaming the same bewildering dream.

Helena and Demetrius were by this time awake; and a sweet sleep having quieted Helena's disturbed and angry spirits, she listened with delight to the professions of love which Demetrius still made to her, and which, to her surprise as well as pleasure, she began to perceive were sincere.

These fair night-wandering ladies, now no longer rivals, became once more true friends; all the unkind words which had passed were forgiven, and they calmly consulted together what was best to be done in their present situation. It was soon agreed that, as Demetrius had given up his pretensions to Hermia, he should endeavour to prevail upon her father to revoke the cruel sentence of death which had been passed against her. Demetrius was preparing to return to Athens for this friendly purpose, when they were surprised with the sight of Egeus, Hermia's father, who came to the wood in pursuit of his runaway daughter.

When Egeus understood that Demetrius would not now marry his daughter, he no longer opposed her marriage with Lysander, but gave his consent that they should be wedded on the fourth day from that time, being the same day on which Hermia had been condemned to lose her life; and on that same day Helena joyfully agreed to marry her beloved and now faithful Demetrius.

The fairy king and queen, who were invisible spectators of this reconciliation, and now saw the happy ending of the lovers' history, brought about through the good offices of Oberon, received so much pleasure, that these kind spirits resolved to celebrate the approaching nuptials with sports and revels throughout their fairy kingdom.

And now, if any are offended with this story of fairies and their pranks, as judging it incredible and strange, they have only to think that they have been asleep and dreaming, and that all these adventures were visions which they saw in their sleep: and I hope none of my readers will be so unreasonable as to be offended with a pretty, harmless Midsummer Night's Dream.

THE WINTER'S TALE

LEONTES, king of Sicily, and his queen, the beautiful and virtuous Hermione, once lived in the greatest harmony together. So happy was Leontes in the love of this excellent lady, that he had no wish ungratified, except that he sometimes desired to see again, and to present to his queen, his old companion and school-fellow, Polixenes, king of Bohemia. Leontes and Polixenes were brought up together from their infancy, but being, by the death of their fathers, called to reign over their respective kingdoms, they had not met for many years, though they frequently interchanged gifts, letters, and loving embassies.

At length, after repeated invitations, Polixenes came from Bohemia to the Sicilian court, to make his friend Leontes a visit.

At first this visit gave nothing but pleasure to Leontes. He recommended the friend of his youth to the queen's particular attention, and seemed in the presence of his dear friend and old companion to have his felicity quite completed. They talked over old times; their school-days and their youthful pranks were remembered, and recounted to Hermione, who always took a cheerful part in these conversations.

When, after a long stay, Polixenes was preparing to depart, Hermione, at the desire of her husband, joined her entreaties to his that Polixenes would prolong his visit.

And now began this good queen's sorrow; for Polixenes refusing to stay at the request of Leontes, was won over by Hermione's gentle and persuasive words to put off his departure for some weeks longer. Upon this, although Leontes had so long known the integrity and honourable principles of his friend Polixenes, as well as the excellent disposition of his virtuous queen, he was seized with an ungovernable jealousy. Every attention Hermione showed to

Polixenes, though by her husband's particular desire, and merely to please him, increased the unfortunate king's jealousy; and from being a loving and a true friend, and the best and fondest of husbands, Leontes became suddenly a savage and inhuman monster. Sending for Camillo, one of the lords of his court, and telling him of the suspicion he entertained, he commanded him to poison Polixenes.

Camillo was a good man; and he, well knowing that the jealousy of Leontes had not the slightest foundation in truth, instead of poisoning Polixenes, acquainted him with the king his master's orders, and agreed to escape with him out of the Sicilian dominions; and Polixenes, with the assistance of Camillo, arrived safe in his own kingdom of Bohemia, where Camillo lived from that time in the king's court, and became the chief friend and favourite of Polixenes.

The flight of Polixenes enraged the jealous Leontes still more; he went to the queen's apartment, where the good lady was sitting with her little son Mamillius, who was just beginning to tell one of his best stories to amuse his mother, when the king entered, and taking the child away, sent Hermione to prison.

Mamillius, though but a very young child, loved his mother tenderly; and when he saw her so dishonoured, and found she was taken from him to be put into a prison, he took it deeply to heart, and drooped and pined away by slow degrees, losing his appetite and his sleep, till it was thought his grief would kill him.

The king, when he had sent his queen to prison, commanded Cleomenes and Dion, two Sicilian lords, to go to Delphos, there to inquire of the oracle at the temple of Apollo, if his queen had been unfaithful to him.

When Hermione had been a short time in prison, she was brought to bed of a daughter; and the poor lady received much comfort from the sight of her pretty baby, and she said to it, " My poor little prisoner, I am as innocent as you are."

Hermione had a kind friend in the noble-spirited Paulina, who was the wife of Antigonus, a Sicilian lord; and when the lady Paulina heard her royal mistress was brought to bed, she went to the prison where Hermione was confined; and she said to Emilia, a lady who attended upon Hermione, " I pray you, Emilia, tell the good queen, if her majesty dare trust me with her little babe, I will carry it to the king, its father; we do not know how he may soften at the sight of his innocent child." " Most worthy madam," replied Emilia, " I will acquaint the queen with your noble offer; she was wishing to-day that she had any friend who would venture to present the child to the king." " And tell her," said Paulina, " that I will speak boldly to Leontes in her defence." " May you be for ever blessed," said Emilia, " for your kindness to our gracious queen!" Emilia then went to Hermione, who joyfully gave up her baby to the care of Paulina, for she had feared that no one would dare venture to present the child to its father.

Paulina took the new-born infant, and forcing herself into the king's presence, notwithstanding her husband, fearing the king's anger, endeavoured to prevent her, she laid the babe at its father's feet, and Paulina made a noble speech to the king in defence of Hermione, and she reproached him severely for his inhumanity, and implored him to have mercy on his innocent wife and child. But Paulina's spirited remonstrances only aggravated Leontes' displeasure, and he ordered her husband Antigonus to take her from his presence.

When Paulina went away, she left the little baby at its father's feet, thinking when he was alone with it, he would look upon it, and have pity on its helpless innocence.

The good Paulina was mistaken: for no sooner was she gone than the merciless father ordered Antigonus, Paulina's husband, to take the child, and carry it out to sea, and leave it upon some desert shore to perish.

Antigonus, unlike the good Camillo, too well obeyed the orders of Leontes; for he immediately carried the child on ship-board, and put out to sea, intending to leave it on the first desert coast he could find.

So firmly was the king persuaded of the guilt of Hermione, that he would not wait for the return of Cleomenes and Dion, whom he had sent to consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphos; but before the queen was recovered from her lying-in, and from her grief for the loss of her precious baby, he had her brought to a public trial before all the lords and nobles of his court. And when all the great lords, the judges, and all the nobility of the land were assembled together to try Hermione, and that unhappy queen was standing as a prisoner before her subjects to receive their judgment, Cleomenes and Dion entered the assembly, and presented to the king the answer of the oracle, sealed up; and Leontes commanded the seal to be broken, and the words of the oracle to be read aloud, and these were the words: —"*Hermione is innocent, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, and the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found.*" The king would give no credit to the words of the oracle: he said it was a falsehood invented by the queen's friends, and he desired the judge to proceed in the trial of the queen; but while Leontes was speaking, a man entered and told him that the prince Mamillius, hearing his mother was to be tried for her life, struck with grief and shame, had suddenly died.

Hermione, upon hearing of the death of this dear affectionate child, who had lost his life in sorrowing for her misfortune, fainted; and Leontes, pierced to the heart by the news, began to feel pity for his unhappy queen, and he ordered Paulina, and the ladies who were her attendants, to take her away, and use means for her recovery. Paulina soon returned, and told the king that Hermione was dead.

When Leontes heard that the queen was dead, he repented of his cruelty to her; and now that he thought his ill-usage had broken Hermione's heart, he believed her innocent; and now he thought the words of the oracle were true, as he knew "if that which was lost was not found," which he concluded was his young daughter, he should be without an heir, the young prince Mamillius being dead; and he would give his kingdom now to recover his lost daughter: and Leontes gave himself up to remorse, and passed many years in mournful thoughts and repentant grief.

The ship in which Antigonus carried the infant princess out to sea was driven by a storm upon the coast of Bohemia, the very kingdom of the good king Polixenes. Here Antigonus landed, and here he left the little baby.

Antigonus never returned to Sicily to tell Leontes where he had left his daughter, for as he was going back to the ship, a bear came out of the woods, and tore him to pieces; a just punishment on him for obeying the wicked order of Leontes.

The child was dressed in rich clothes and jewels; for Hermione had made it very fine when she sent it to Leontes, and Antigonus had pinned a paper to its mantle, and the name of *Perdita* written thereon, and words obscurely intimating its high birth and untoward fate.

This poor deserted baby was found by a shepherd. He was a humane man, and so he carried the little Perdita home to his wife, who nursed it tenderly; but poverty tempted the shepherd to conceal the rich prize he had found: therefore he left that part of the country, that no one might know where he got his riches, and with part of Perdita's jewels he bought herds of sheep, and became a wealthy shepherd. He brought up Perdita as his own child, and she knew not she was any other than a shepherd's daughter.

The little Perdita grew up a lovely maiden; and though she had no better education than that of a shepherd's daughter, yet so did the natural graces she inherited from her royal mother shine forth in her untutored mind, that no one from her behaviour would have known she had not been brought up in her father's court.

Polixenes, the king of Bohemia, had an only son, whose name was Florizel. As this young prince was hunting near the shepherd's dwelling, he saw the old man's supposed daughter; and the beauty, modesty, and queen-like deportment of Perdita caused him instantly to fall in love with her. He soon, under the name of Doricles, and in the disguise of a private gentleman, became a constant visitor at the old shepherd's house. Florizel's frequent absences from court alarmed Polixenes; and setting people to watch his son, he discovered his love for the shepherd's fair daughter.

Polixenes then called for Camillo, the faithful Camillo, who had preserved his life from the fury of Leontes, and desired that he would accompany him to the house of the shepherd, the supposed father of Perdita.

Polixenes and Camillo, both in disguise, arrived at the old shepherd's dwelling while they were celebrating the feast of sheep-shearing; and though they were strangers, yet at the sheep-shearing every guest being made welcome, they were invited to walk in, and join in the general festivity.

Nothing but mirth and jollity was going forward. Tables were spread, and great preparations were making for the rustic feast. Some lads and lasses were dancing on the green before the house, while others of the young men were buying ribands, gloves, and such toys, of a pedlar at the door.

While this busy scene was going forward, Florizel and Perdita sat quietly in a retired corner, seemingly more pleased with the conversation of each other, than desirous of engaging in the sports and silly amusements of those around them.

The king was so disguised that it was impossible his son could know him: he therefore advanced near enough to hear the conversation. The simple yet elegant manner in which Perdita conversed with his son did not a little surprise Polixenes: he said to Camillo, "This is the prettiest low-born lass I ever saw; nothing she does or says but looks like something greater than herself, too noble for this place."

Camillo replied, "Indeed she is the very queen of curds and cream."

"Pray, my good friend," said the king to the old shepherd, "what fair swain is that talking with your daughter?" "They call him Doricles," replied the shepherd. "He says he loves my daughter; and, to speak truth, there is not a kiss to choose which loves the other best. If young Doricles can get her, she shall bring him that he little dreams of;" meaning the remainder of Perdita's jewels; which, after he had bought herds of sheep with part of them, he had carefully hoarded up for her marriage portion.

Polixenes then addressed his son. "How now, young man!" said he: "your heart seems full of something that takes off your mind from feasting. When I was young, I used to load my love with presents; but you have let the pedlar go, and have bought your lass no toy."

The young prince, who little thought he was talking to the king, his father, replied, "Old sir, she prizes not such trifles; the gifts which Perdita expects from me are locked up in my heart." Then turning to Perdita, he said to her, "O hear me, Perdita, before this ancient gentleman, who it seems was once himself a lover; he shall hear what I profess." Florizel then called upon the old stranger to be a witness to a solemn promise of marriage which he made to Perdita, saying to Polixenes, "I pray you, mark our contract."

"Mark your divorce, young sir," said the king, discovering himself. Polixenes then reproached his son for daring to contract himself to this low-born maiden, calling Perdita "shepherd's-brat, sheep-hook," and other disrespectful names; and threatening, if ever she suffered his son to see her again, he would put her, and the old shepherd, her father, to a cruel death.

The king then left them in great wrath, and ordered Camillo to follow him with prince Florizel.

When the king had departed, Perdita, whose royal nature was roused by Polixenes' reproaches, said, "Though we are all undone, I was not much afraid; and once or twice I was about to speak, and tell him plainly that the selfsame sun which shines upon his palace, hides not his face from our cottage, but looks on both alike." Then sorrowfully she said, "But now I am awakened from this dream, I will queen it no further. Leave me, sir; I will go milk my ewes and weep."

The kind-hearted Camillo was charmed with the spirit and propriety of Perdita's behaviour; and perceiving that the young prince was too deeply in love to give up his mistress at the command of his royal father, he thought of a way to befriend the lovers, and at the same time to execute a favourite scheme he had in his mind.

Camillo had long known that Leontes, the king of Sicily, was become a true penitent; and though Camillo was now the favoured friend of king Polixenes, he could not help wishing once more to see his late royal master and his native home. He therefore proposed to Florizel and Perdita that they should accompany him to the Sicilian court, where he would engage Leontes should protect them, till, through his mediation, they could obtain pardon from Polixenes, and his consent to their marriage.

To this proposal they joyfully agreed; and Camillo, who conducted everything relative to their flight, allowed the old shepherd to go along with them.

The shepherd took with him the remainder of Perdita's jewels, her baby clothes, and the paper which he had found pinned to her mantle.

After a prosperous voyage, Florizel and Perdita, Camillo and the old shepherd, arrived in safety at the court of Leontes. Leontes, who still mourned his dead Hermione and his lost child, received Camillo with great kindness, and gave a cordial welcome to prince Florizel. But Perdita, whom Florizel introduced as his princess, seemed to engross all Leontes' attention: perceiving a resemblance between her and his dead queen Hermione, his grief broke out afresh, and he said, such a lovely creature might his own daughter have been, if he had not so cruelly destroyed her. "And then, too," said he to Florizel, "I lost the society and friendship of your brave father, whom I now desire more than my life once again to look upon."

When the old shepherd heard how much notice the king had taken of Perdita, and that he had lost a daughter, who was exposed in infancy, he fell to comparing the time when he found the little Perdita, with the manner of its exposure, the jewels and other tokens of its high birth; from all which it was impossible for him not to conclude that Perdita and the king's lost daughter were the same.

Florizel and Perdita, Camillo and the faithful Paulina, were present when the old shepherd related to the king the manner in which he had found the child, and also the circumstance of Antigonus' death, he having seen the bear seize upon him. He showed the rich mantle in which Paulina remembered Hermione had wrapped the child; and he produced a jewel which she remembered Hermione had tied about Perdita's neck, and he gave up the paper which Paulina knew to be the writing of her husband; it could not be doubted that Perdita was Leontes' own daughter: but oh! the noble struggles of Paulina, between sorrow for her husband's death, and joy that the oracle was fulfilled, in the king's heir, his long-lost daughter being found. When Leontes heard that Perdita was his daughter, the great sorrow that he felt that Hermione was not living to behold her child, made him that he could say nothing for a long time, but, "O thy mother, thy mother!"

Paulina interrupted this joyful yet distressful scene, with saying to Leontes, that she had a statue newly finished by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, which was such a perfect resemblance of the queen, that would his majesty be pleased to go to her house and look upon it, he would be almost ready to think it was Hermione herself. Thither then they all went; the king anxious to see the semblance of his Hermione, and Perdita longing to behold what the mother she never saw did look like.

When Paulina drew back the curtain which concealed this famous statue, so perfectly did it resemble Hermione, that all the king's sorrow was renewed at the sight: for a long time he had no power to speak or move.

"I like your silence, my liege," said Paulina, "it the more shows your wonder. Is not this statue very like your queen?"

At length the king said, "O, thus she stood, even with such majesty, when I first wooed her. But yet, Paulina, Hermione was not so aged as this statue looks." Paulina replied, "So much the more the carver's excellence, who has made the statue as Hermione would have looked had she been living now. But let me draw the curtain, sire, lest presently you think it moves."

The king then said, "Do not draw the curtain! Would I were dead! See, Camillo, would you not think it breathed? Her eye seems to have motion in it." "I must draw the curtain, my liege," said Paulina. "You are so transported, you will persuade yourself the statue lives." "O, sweet Paulina," said Leontes, "make me think so twenty years together! Still methinks there is an air comes from her. What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me, for I will kiss her." "Good my lord, forbear!" said Paulina. "The ruddiness upon her lip is wet; you will stain your own with oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?" "No, not these twenty years," said Leontes.

Perdita, who all this time had been kneeling, and beholding in silent admiration the statue of her matchless mother, said now, "And so long could I stay here, looking upon my dear mother."

"Either forbear this transport," said Paulina to Leontes, "and let me draw the curtain; or prepare yourself for more amazement. I can make the statue move indeed; ay, and descend from off the pedestal, and take you by the hand. But then you will think, which I protest I am not, that I am assisted by some wicked powers."

"What you can make her do," said the astonished king, "I am content to look upon. What you can make her speak, I am content to hear; for it is as easy to make her speak as move."

Paulina then ordered some slow and solemn music, which she had prepared for the purpose, to strike up; and, to the amazement of all the beholders, the statue came down from off the pedestal, and threw its arms around Leontes' neck. The statue then began to speak, praying for blessings on her husband, and on her child, the newly-found Perdita.

No wonder that the statue hung upon Leontes' neck, and blessed her husband and her child. No wonder; for the statue was indeed Hermione herself, the real, the living queen.

Paulina had falsely reported to the king the death of Hermione, thinking that the only means to preserve her royal mistress' life; and with the good Paulina, Hermione had lived ever since, never choosing Leontes should know she was living, till she heard Perdita was found; for though she had long forgiven the injuries which Leontes had done to herself, she could not pardon his cruelty to his infant daughter.

His dead queen thus restored to life, his lost daughter found, the long-sorrowing Leontes could scarcely support the excess of his own happiness.

Nothing but congratulations and affectionate speeches were heard on all sides. Now the delighted parents thanked prince Florizel for loving their lowly-seeming daughter; and now they blessed the good old shepherd for preserving their child. Greatly did Camillo and Paulina rejoice that they had lived to see so good an end of all their faithful services.

And as if nothing should be wanting to complete this strange and unlooked-for joy, king Polixenes himself now entered the palace.

When Polixenes first missed his son and Camillo, knowing that Camillo had long wished to return to Sicily, he conjectured he should find the fugitives here; and, following them with all speed, he happened to just arrive at this, the happiest moment of Leontes' life.

Polixenes took a part in the general joy; he forgave his friend Leontes the unjust jealousy he had conceived against him, and they once more loved each other with all the warmth of their first boyish friendship. And there was no fear that Polixenes would now oppose his son's marriage with Perdita. She was no "sheep-hook" now, but the heiress of the crown of Sicily.

Thus have we seen the patient virtues of the long-suffering Hermione rewarded. That excellent lady lived many years with her Leontes and her Perdita, the happiest of mothers and of queens.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

THERE lived in the palace at Messina two ladies, whose names were Hero and Beatrice. Hero was the daughter, and Beatrice the niece, of Leonato, the governor of Messina.

Beatrice was of a lively temper, and loved to divert her cousin Hero, who was of a more serious disposition, with her sprightly sallies. Whatever was going forward was sure to make matter of mirth for the light-hearted Beatrice.

At the time the history of these ladies commences some young men of high rank in the army, as they were passing through Messina on their return from a war that was just ended, in which they had distinguished themselves by their great bravery, came to visit Leonato. Among these were Don Pedro, the Prince of Arragon; and his friend Claudio, who was a lord of Florence; and with them came the wild and witty Benedick, and he was a lord of Padua.

These strangers had been at Messina before, and the hospitable governor introduced them to his daughter and his niece as their old friends and acquaintance.

Benedick, the moment he entered the room, began a lively conversation with Leonato and the prince. Beatrice, who liked not to be left out of any discourse, interrupted Benedick with saying, "I wonder that you will still be talking, signior Benedick: nobody marks you." Benedick was just such another rattle-brain as Beatrice, yet he was not pleased at this free salutation; he thought it did not become a well-bred lady to be so flippant with her tongue; and he remembered, when he was last at Messina, that Beatrice used to select him to make her merry jests upon. And as there is no one who so little likes to be made a jest of as those who are apt to take the same liberty themselves, so it was with Benedick and

Beatrice; these two sharp wits never met in former times but a perfect war of raillery was kept up between them, and they always parted mutually displeased with each other. Therefore when Beatrice stopped him in the middle of his discourse with telling him nobody marked what he was saying, Benedick, affecting not to have observed before that she was present, said, "What, my dear lady Disdain, are you yet living?" And now war broke out afresh between them, and a long jangling argument ensued, during which Beatrice, although she knew he had so well approved his valour in the late war, said that she would eat all he had killed there: and observing the prince take delight in Benedick's conversation, she called him "the prince's jester." This sarcasm sunk deeper into the mind of Benedick than all Beatrice had said before. The hint she gave him that he was a coward, by saying she would eat all he had killed, he did not regard, knowing himself to be a brave man; but there is nothing that great wits so much dread as the imputation of buffoonery, because the charge comes sometimes a little too near the truth: therefore Benedick perfectly hated Beatrice, when she called him "the prince's jester."

The modest lady Hero was silent before the noble guests; and while Claudio was attentively observing the improvement which time had made in her beauty, and was contemplating the exquisite graces of her fine figure (for she was an admirable young lady), the prince was highly amused with listening to the humorous dialogue between Benedick and Beatrice; and he said in a whisper to Leonato, "This is a pleasant-spirited young lady. She were an excellent wife for Benedick." Leonato replied to this suggestion, "O, my lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad." But though Leonato thought they would make a discordant pair, the prince did not give up the idea of matching these two keen wits together.

When the prince returned with Claudio from the palace, he found that the marriage he had devised between Benedick and Beatrice was not the only one projected in that good company, for Claudio spoke in such terms of Hero, as made the prince guess at what was passing in his heart; and he liked it well, and he said to Claudio, "Do you affect Hero?" To this question Claudio replied, "O my lord, when I was last at Messina, I looked upon her with a soldier's eye, that liked, but had no leisure for loving; but now, in this happy time of peace, thoughts of war have left their places vacant in my mind, and in their room come thronging soft and delicate thoughts, all prompting me how fair young Hero is, reminding me that I liked her before I went to the wars." Claudio's confession of his love for Hero so wrought upon the prince, that he lost no time in soliciting the consent of Leonato to accept of Claudio for a son-in-law. Leonato agreed to this proposal, and the prince found no great difficulty in persuading the gentle Hero herself to listen to the suit of the noble Claudio, who was a lord of rare endowments, and highly accomplished, and Claudio, assisted by his kind prince, soon prevailed upon Leonato to fix an early day for the celebration of his marriage with Hero.

Claudio was to wait but a few days before he was to be married to his fair lady; yet he complained of the interval being tedious, as indeed most young men are impatient when they are waiting for the accomplishment of any event they have set their hearts upon: the prince, therefore, to make the time seem short to him, proposed as a kind of merry pastime that they should invent some artful scheme to make Benedick and Beatrice fall in love with each other. Claudio entered with great satisfaction into this whim of the prince, and Leonato promised them his assistance, and even Hero said she would do any modest office to help her cousin to a good husband.

The device the prince invented was, that the gentlemen should make Benedick believe that Beatrice was in love with him, and that Hero should make Beatrice believe that Benedick was in love with her.

The prince, Leonato, and Claudio began their operations first: and watching upon an opportunity when Benedick was quietly seated reading in an arbour, the prince and his assistants took their station among the trees behind the arbour, so near that Benedick could not choose but hear all they said; and after some careless talk the prince said, "Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me the other day — that your niece Beatrice was in love with signior Benedick? I did never think that lady would have loved any man." "No, nor I neither, my lord," answered Leonato. "It is most wonderful that she should so dote on Benedick, whom she in all outward behaviour seemed ever to dislike." Claudio confirmed all this with saying that Hero had told him Beatrice was so in love with Benedick, that she would certainly die of grief, if he could not be brought to love her; which Leonato and Claudio seemed to agree was impossible, he having always been such a railer against all fair ladies, and in particular against Beatrice.

The prince affected to hearken to all this with great compassion for Beatrice, and he said, "It were good that Benedick were told of this." "To what end?" said Claudio; "he would but make sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse." "And if he should," said the prince, "it were a good deed to hang him; for Beatrice is an excellent sweet lady, and exceeding wise in everything but in loving Benedick." Then the prince motioned to his companions that they should walk on, and leave Benedick to meditate upon what he had overheard.

Benedick had been listening with great eagerness to this conversation; and he said to himself when he heard Beatrice loved him, "Is it possible? Sits the wind in that corner?" And when they were gone, he began to reason in this manner with himself: "This can be no trick! they were very serious, and they have the truth from Hero, and seem to pity the lady. Love me! Why it must be requited! I did never think to marry. But when I said I should die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married. They say the lady is virtuous and fair. She is so. And wise in everything but loving me. Why, that is no great argument of her folly. But here comes Beatrice. By this day, she is a fair lady. I do spy some marks of love in her." Beatrice now approached him, and said with her usual tartness, "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner." Benedick, who never felt himself disposed to speak so politely to her before, replied, "Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains:" and when Beatrice, after two or three more rude speeches, left him, Benedick thought he observed a concealed meaning of kindness under the uncivil words she uttered, and he said aloud, "If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain. If I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture."

The gentleman being thus caught in the net they had spread for him, it was now Hero's turn to play her part with Beatrice; and for this purpose she sent for Ursula and Margaret, two gentlewomen who attended upon her, and she said to Margaret, "Good Margaret, run to the parlour; there you will find my cousin Beatrice talking with the prince and Claudio. Whisper in her ear, that I and Ursula are walking in the orchard, and that our discourse is all of her. Bid her steal into that pleasant arbour, where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun, like ungrateful minions, forbid the sun to enter." This arbour, into which Hero desired Margaret to entice Beatrice, was the very same pleasant arbour where Benedick had so lately been an attentive listener.

"I will make her come, I warrant, presently," said Margaret.

Hero, then taking Ursula with her into the orchard, said to her, "Now, Ursula, when Beatrice comes, we will walk up and down this alley, and our talk must be only of Benedick, and when I name him, let it be your part to praise him more than ever man did merit. My talk to you must be how Benedick is in love with Beatrice. Now begin; for look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs close by the ground, to hear our conference." They then began; Hero saying, as if in answer to something which Ursula had said, "No, truly, Ursula. She is too disdainful; her spirits are as coy as wild birds of the rock." "But are you sure," said Ursula, "that Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?" Hero replied, "So says the prince, and my lord Claudio, and they entreated me to acquaint her with it; but I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick, never to let Beatrice know of it." "Certainly," replied Ursula, "it were not good she knew his love, lest she made sport of it." "Why, to say truth," said Hero, "I never yet saw a man, how wise soever, or noble, young, or rarely featured, but she would dispraise him." "Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable," said Ursula. "No," replied Hero, "but who dare tell her so? If I should speak, she would mock me into air." "O! you wrong your cousin," said Ursula: "she cannot be so much without true judgment, as to refuse so rare a gentleman as signior Benedick." "He hath an excellent good name," said Hero: "indeed, he is the first man in Italy, always excepting my dear Claudio." And now, Hero giving her attendant a hint that it was time to change the discourse, Ursula said, "And when are you to be married, madam?" Hero then told her, that she was to be married to Claudia the next day, and desired she would go in with her, and look at some new attire, as she wished to consult with her on what she would wear on the morrow. Beatrice, who had been listening with breathless eagerness to this dialogue, when they went away, exclaimed, "What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true? Farewell, contempt and scorn, and maiden pride, adieu! Benedick, love on! I will requite you, taming my wild heart to your loving hand."

It must have been a pleasant sight to see these old enemies converted into new and loving friends, and to behold their first meeting after being cheated into mutual liking by the merry artifice of the good-humoured prince. But a sad reverse in the fortunes of Hero must now be thought of. The morrow, which was to have been her wedding-day, brought sorrow on the heart of Hero and her good father Leonato.

The prince had a half-brother, who came from the wars along with him to Messina. This brother (his name was Don John) was a melancholy, discontented man, whose spirits seemed to labour in the contriving of villanies. He hated the prince his brother, and he hated Claudio, because he was the prince's friend, and determined to prevent Claudio's marriage with Hero, only for the malicious pleasure of making Claudio and the prince unhappy; for he knew the prince had set his heart upon this marriage, almost as much as Claudio himself; and to effect this wicked purpose, he employed one Borachio, a man as bad as himself, whom he encouraged with the offer of a great reward. This Borachio paid his court to Margaret, Hero's attendant; and Don John, knowing this, prevailed upon him to make Margaret promise to talk with him from her lady's chamber window that night, after Hero was asleep, and also to dress herself in Hero's clothes, the better to deceive Claudio into the belief that it was Hero; for that was the end he meant to compass by this wicked plot.

Don John then went to the prince and Claudio, and told them that Hero was an imprudent lady, and that she talked with men from her chamber window at midnight. Now this was the evening before the wedding, and he offered to take them that night, where they should themselves hear Hero discoursing with a man from her window; and they consented to go along with him, and Claudio said, "If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her, to-morrow in the congregation, where I intended to wed her, there will I shame her." The prince also said, "And as I assisted you to obtain her, I will join with you to disgrace her."

When Don John brought them near Hero's chamber that night, they saw Borachio standing under the window, and they saw Margaret looking out of Hero's window, and heard her talking with Borachio: and Margaret being dressed in the same clothes they had seen Hero wear, the prince and Claudio believed it was the lady Hero herself.

Nothing could equal the anger of Claudio, when he had made (as he thought) this discovery. All his love for the innocent Hero was at once converted into hatred, and he resolved to expose her in the church, as he had said he would, the next day; and the prince agreed to this, thinking no punishment could be too severe for the naughty lady, who talked with a man from her window that very night before she was going to be married to the noble Claudio.

The next day, when they were all met to celebrate the marriage, and Claudio and Hero were standing before the priest, and the priest, or friar, as he was called, was proceeding to pronounce the marriage ceremony, Claudio, in the most passionate language, proclaimed the guilt of the blameless Hero, who, amazed at the strange words he uttered, said meekly, " Is my lord well, that he does speak so wide? "

Leonato, in the utmost horror, said to the prince, " My lord, why speak not you? " " What should I speak? " said the prince; " I stand dishonoured, that have gone about to link my dear friend to an unworthy woman. Leonato, upon my honour, myself, my brother, and this grieved Claudio, did see and hear her last night at midnight talk with a man at her chamber window."

Benedick, in astonishment at what he heard, said, " This looks not like a nuptial."

" True, O God! " replied the heart-struck Hero; and then this hapless lady sunk down in a fainting fit, to all appearance dead. The prince and Claudio left the church, without staying to see if Hero would recover, or at all regarding the distress into which they had thrown Leonato. So hard-hearted had their anger made them.

Benedick remained, and assisted Beatrice to recover Hero from her swoon, saying, " How does the lady? " " Dead, I think," replied Beatrice in great agony, for she loved her cousin; and knowing her virtuous principles, she believed nothing of what she had heard spoken against her. Not so the poor old father; he believed the story of his child's shame, and it was piteous to hear him lamenting over her, as she lay like one dead before him, wishing she might never more open her eyes.

But the ancient friar was a wise man, and full of observation on human nature, and he had attentively marked the lady's countenance when she heard herself accused, and noted a thousand blushing shames to start into her face, and then he saw an angel-like whiteness bear away those blushes, and in her eye he saw a fire that did belie the error that the prince did speak against her maiden truth, and he said to the sorrowing father, "Call me a fool; trust not my reading, nor my observation; trust not my age, my reverence, nor my calling, if this sweet lady lie not guiltless here under some biting error."

When Hero had recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, the friar said to her, "Lady, what man is he you are accused of?" Hero replied, "They know that do accuse me; I know of none:" then turning to Leonato, she said, "O my father, if you can prove that any man has ever conversed with me at hours unmeet, or that I yesternight changed words with any creature, refuse me, hate me, torture me to death."

"There is," said the friar, "some strange misunderstanding in the prince and Claudio;" and then he counselled Leonato, that he should report that Hero was dead; and he said that the death-like swoon in which they had left Hero would make this easy of belief; and he also advised him that he should put on mourning, and erect a monument for her, and do all rites that appertain to a burial. "What shall become of this?" said Leonato; "What will this do?" The friar replied, "This report of her death shall change slander into pity: that is some good; but that is not all the good I hope for. When Claudio shall hear she died upon hearing his words, the idea of her life shall sweetly creep into his imagination. Then shall he mourn, if ever love had interest in his heart, and wish that he had not so accused her; yea, though he thought his accusation true."

Benedick now said, "Leonato, let the friar advise you; and though you know how well I love the prince and Claudio, yet on my honour I will not reveal this secret to them."

Leonato, thus persuaded, yielded; and he said sorrowfully, "I am so grieved, that the smallest twine may lead me." The kind friar then led Leonato and Hero away to comfort and console them, and

Beatrice and Benedick remained alone; and this was the meeting from which their friends, who contrived the merry plot against them, expected so much diversion; those friends who were now overwhelmed with affliction, and from whose minds all thoughts of merriment seemed for ever banished.

Benedick was the first who spoke, and he said, "Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?" "Yea, and I will weep a while longer," said Beatrice. "Surely," said Benedick, "I do believe your fair cousin is wronged." "Ah!" said Beatrice, "how much might that man deserve of me who would right her!" Benedick then said, "Is there any way to show such friendship? I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?" "It were as possible," said Beatrice, "for me to say I loved nothing in the world so well as you; but believe me not, and yet I lie not. I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin." "By my sword," said Benedick, "you love me, and I protest I love you. Come, bid me do anything for you." "Kill Claudio," said Beatrice. "Ha! not for the wide world," said Benedick; for he loved his friend Claudio, and he believed he had been imposed upon. "Is not Claudio a villain, that has slandered, scorned, and dishonoured my cousin?" said Beatrice: "O that I were a man!" "Hear me, Beatrice!" said Benedick. But Beatrice would hear nothing in Claudio's defence; and she continued to urge on Benedick to revenge her cousin's wrongs: and she said, "Talk with a man out of the window; a proper saying! Sweet Hero! she is wronged; she is slandered; she is undone. O that I were a man for Claudio's sake! or that I had any friend, who would be a man for my sake! but valour is melted into courtesies and compliments. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving." "Tarry, good Beatrice," said Benedick: "by this hand I love you." "Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it," said Beatrice. "Think you on your soul that Claudio has wronged Hero?" asked Benedick. "Yea," answered Beatrice; "as sure as I have a thought or a soul." "Enough," said Benedick: "I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account! As you hear from me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin."

While Beatrice was thus powerfully pleading with Benedick, and working his gallant temper by the spirit of her angry words, to engage in the cause of Hero, and fight even with his dear friend Claudio, Leonato was challenging the prince and Claudio to answer with their swords the injury they had done his child, who, he affirmed, had died for grief. But they respected his age and his sorrow, and they said, "Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man." And now came Benedick, and he also challenged Claudio to answer with his sword the injury he had done to Hero; and Claudio and the prince said to each other, "Beatrice has set him on to do this." Claudio nevertheless must have accepted this challenge of Benedick, had not the justice of Heaven at the moment brought to pass a better proof of the innocence of Hero than the uncertain fortune of a duel.

While the prince and Claudio were yet talking of the challenge of Benedick, a magistrate brought Borachio as a prisoner before the prince. Borachio had been overheard talking with one of his companions of the mischief he had been employed by Don John to do.

Borachio made a full confession to the prince in Claudio's hearing, that it was Margaret dressed in her lady's clothes that he had talked with from the window, whom they had mistaken for the lady Hero herself; and no doubt continued on the minds of Claudio and the prince of the innocence of Hero. If a suspicion had remained it must have been removed by the flight of Don John, who, finding his villanies were detected, fled from Messina to avoid the just anger of his brother.

The heart of Claudio was sorely grieved when he found he had falsely accused Hero, who, he thought, died upon hearing his cruel words; and the memory of his beloved Hero's image came over him, in the rare semblance that he loved it first; and the prince asking him if what he heard did not run like iron through his soul, he answered, that he felt as if he had taken poison while Borachio was speaking.

And the repentant Claudio implored forgiveness of the old man Leonato for the injury he had done his child; and promised, that whatever penance Leonato would lay upon him for his fault in believing the false accusation against his betrothed wife, for her dear sake he would endure it.

The penance Leonato enjoined him was, to marry the next morning a cousin of Hero's, who, he said, was now his heir, and in person very like Hero. Claudio, regarding the solemn promise he made to Leonato, said, he would marry this unknown lady, even though she were an Ethiop: but his heart was very sorrowful, and he passed that night in tears, and in remorseful grief, at the tomb which Leonato had erected for Hero.

When the morning came, the prince accompanied Claudio to the church, where the good friar, and Leonato and his niece, were already assembled, to celebrate a second nuptial; and Leonato presented to Claudio his promised bride; and she wore a mask, that Claudio might not discover her face. And Claudio said to the lady in the mask, "Give me your hand, before this holy friar; I am your husband, if you will marry me." "And when I lived I was your other wife," said this unknown lady; and, taking off her mask, she proved to be no niece (as was pretended), but Leonato's very daughter, the lady Hero herself. We may be sure that this proved a most agreeable surprise to Claudio, who thought her dead, so that he could scarcely for joy believe his eyes; and the prince, who was equally amazed at what he saw, exclaimed, "Is not this Hero, Hero that was dead?" Leonato replied, "She died, my lord, but while her slander lived." The friar promised them an explanation of this seeming miracle, after the ceremony was ended; and was proceeding to marry them, when he was interrupted by Benedick, who desired to be married at the same time to Beatrice. Beatrice making some demur to this match, and Benedick challenging her with her love for him, which he had learned from Hero, a pleasant explanation took place; and they found they had both been tricked into a belief of love, which had never existed, and had become lovers in truth by the power of a false jest: but the affection, which a merry invention had cheated them into, was grown too powerful to be shaken by a serious explanation; and since Benedick proposed to marry, he was resolved to think nothing to the purpose that the world could say against it; and he merrily kept up the jest, and swore to Beatrice, that he took her but for pity, and because he heard she was dying of love for him; and Beatrice protested, that she yielded but upon great persuasion, and partly to save his life, for she heard he was in a consumption. So these two mad wits were reconciled, and made a match of it, after Claudio and Hero were married; and to complete the history, Don John, the contriver of the villainy, was taken in his flight, and brought back to Messina; and a brave punishment it was to this gloomy, discontented man, to see the joy and feastings which, by the disappointment of his plots, took place in the palace in Messina.

AS YOU LIKE IT

DURING the time that France was divided into provinces (or dukedoms as they were called) there reigned in one of these provinces an usurper, who had deposed and banished his elder brother, the lawful duke.

The duke, who was thus driven from his dominions, retired with a few faithful followers to the forest of Arden; and here the good duke lived with his loving friends, who had put themselves into a voluntary exile for his sake, while their land and revenues enriched the false usurper; and custom soon made the life of careless ease they led here more sweet to them than the pomp and uneasy splendour of a courtier's life. Here they lived like the old Robin Hood of England, and to this forest many noble youths daily resorted from the court, and did fleet the time carelessly, as they did who lived in the golden age. In the summer they lay along under the fine shade of the large forest trees, marking the playful sports of the wild deer; and so fond were they of these poor dappled fools, who seemed to be the native inhabitants of the forest, that it grieved them to be forced to kill them to supply themselves with venison for their food. When the cold winds of winter made the duke feel the change of his adverse fortune, he would endure it patiently, and say, " These chilling winds which blow upon my body are true counsellors; they do not flatter, but represent truly to me my condition; and though they bite sharply, their tooth is nothing like so keen as that of unkindness and ingratitude. I can find that howsoever men speak against adversity, yet some sweet uses are to be extracted from it; like the jewel, precious for medicine, which is taken from the head of the venomous and despised toad." In this manner did the patient duke draw a useful moral from everything that he saw; and by the help of this moralising turn, in that life of his, remote from public haunts, he could find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The banished duke had an only daughter, named Rosalind, whom the usurper, duke Frederick, when he banished her father, still retained in his court as a companion for his own daughter Celia. A strict friendship subsisted between these ladies, which the disagreement between their fathers did not in the least interrupt, Celia striving by every kindness in her power to make amends to Rosalind for the injustice of her own father in deposing the father of Rosalind; and whenever the thoughts of her father's banishment, and her own dependence on the false usurper, made Rosalind melancholy, Celia's whole care was to comfort and console her.

One day, when Celia was talking in her usual kind manner to Rosalind, saying, "I pray you, Rosalind, my sweet cousin, be merry," a messenger entered from the duke, to tell them that if they wished to see a wrestling match, which was just going to begin, they must come instantly to the court before the palace; and Celia, thinking it would amuse Rosalind, agreed to go and see it.

In those times wrestling, which is only practised now by country clowns, was a favourite sport even in the courts of princes, and before fair ladies and princesses. To this wrestling match, therefore, Celia and Rosalind went. They found that it was likely to prove a very tragical sight; for a large and powerful man, who had been long practised in the art of wrestling, and had slain many men in contests of this kind, was just going to wrestle with a very young man, who, from his extreme youth and inexperience in the art, the beholders all thought would certainly be killed.

When the duke saw Celia and Rosalind, he said, "How now, daughter and niece, are you crept hither to see the wrestling? You will take little delight in it, there is such odds in the men: in pity to this young man, I would wish to persuade him from wrestling. Speak to him, ladies, and see if you can move him."

The ladies were well pleased to perform this humane office, and first Celia entreated the young stranger that he would desist from the attempt; and then Rosalind spoke so kindly to him, and with such feeling consideration for the danger he was about to undergo, that instead of being persuaded by her gentle words to forego his purpose, all his thoughts were bent to distinguish himself by his courage in this lovely lady's eyes. He refused the request of Celia and Rosalind in such graceful and modest words, that they felt still more concern for him; he concluded his refusal with saying, "I am sorry to deny such fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein if I be conquered there is one shamed that was never gracious; if I am killed, there is one dead that is willing to die; I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; for I only fill up a place in the world which may be better supplied when I have made it empty."

And now the wrestling match began. Celia wished the young stranger might not be hurt; but Rosalind felt most for him. The friendless state which he said he was in, and that he wished to die, made Rosalind think that he was like herself, unfortunate; and she pitied him so much, and so deep an interest she took in his danger while he was wrestling, that she might almost be said at that moment to have fallen in love with him.

The kindness shown this unknown youth by these fair and noble ladies gave him courage and strength, so that he performed wonders; and in the end completely conquered his antagonist, who was so much hurt, that for a while he was unable to speak or move.

The duke Frederick was much pleased with the courage and skill shown by this young stranger; and desired to know his name and parentage, meaning to take him under his protection.

The stranger said his name was Orlando, and that he was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

Sir Rowland de Boys, the father of Orlando, had been dead some years; but when he was living, he had been a true subject and dear friend of the banished duke: therefore, when Frederick heard Orlando was the son of his banished brother's friend, all his liking for this brave young man was changed into displeasure, and he left the place in very ill humour. Hating to hear the very name of any of his brother's friends, and yet still admiring the valour of the youth, he said, as he went out, that he wished Orlando had been the son of any other man.

Rosalind was delighted to hear that her new favourite was the son of her father's old friend; and she said to Celia, "My father loved Sir Rowland de Boys, and if I had known this young man was his son, I would have added tears to my entreaties before he should have ventured."

The ladies then went up to him; and seeing him abashed by the sudden displeasure shown by the duke, they spoke kind and encouraging words to him; and Rosalind, when they were going away, turned back to speak some more civil things to the brave young son of her father's old friend; and taking a chain from off her neck, she said, "Gentleman, wear this for me. I am out of suits with fortune, or I would give you a more valuable present."

When the ladies were alone, Rosalind's talk being still of Orlando, Celia began to perceive her cousin had fallen in love with the handsome young wrestler, and she said to Rosalind, "Is it possible you should fall in love so suddenly?" Rosalind replied, "The duke, my father, loved his father dearly." "But," said Celia, "does it therefore follow that you should love his son dearly? for then I ought to hate him, for my father hated his father; yet I do not hate Orlando."

Frederick being enraged at the sight of Sir Rowland de Boys' son, which reminded him of the many friends the banished duke had among the nobility, and having been for some time displeased with his niece, because the people praised her for her virtues, and pitied her for her good father's sake, his malice suddenly broke out against her; and while Celia and Rosalind were talking of Orlando, Frederick entered the room, and with looks full of anger ordered Rosalind instantly to leave the palace, and follow her father into banishment; telling Celia, who in vain pleaded for her, that he had only suffered Rosalind to stay upon her account. "I did not then," said Celia, "entreat you to let her stay, for I was too young at that time to value her; but now that I know her worth, and that we so long have slept together, rose at the same instant, learned, played, and eat together, I cannot live out of her company." Frederick replied, "She is too subtle for you; her smoothness, her very silence, and her patience speak to the people, and they pity her. You are a fool to plead for her, for you will seem more bright and virtuous when she is gone; therefore open not your lips in her favour, for the doom which I have passed upon her is irrevocable."

When Celia found she could not prevail upon her father to let Rosalind remain with her, she generously resolved to accompany her; and leaving her father's palace that night, she went along with her friend to seek Rosalind's father, the banished duke, in the forest of Arden.

Before they set out, Celia considered that it would be unsafe for two young ladies to travel in the rich clothes they then wore; she therefore proposed that they should disguise their rank by dressing themselves like country maids. Rosalind said it would be a still greater protection if one of them was to be dressed like a man; and so it was quickly agreed on between them, that as Rosalind was the tallest, she should wear the dress of a young countryman, and Celia should be habited like a country lass, and that they should say they were brother and sister, and Rosalind said she would be called Ganymede, and Celia chose the name of Aliena.

In this disguise, and taking their money and jewels to defray their expenses, these fair princesses set out on their long travel; for the forest of Arden was a long way off, beyond the boundaries of the duke's dominions.

The lady Rosalind (or Ganymede as she must now be called) with her manly garb seemed to have put on a manly courage. The faithful friendship Celia had shown in accompanying Rosalind so many weary miles, made the new brother, in recompense for this true love, exert a cheerful spirit, as if he were indeed Ganymede, the rustic and stout-hearted brother of the gentle village maiden, Aliena.

When at last they came to the forest of Arden, they no longer found the convenient inns and good accommodations they had met with on the road; and being in want of food and rest, Ganymede, who had so merrily cheered his sister with pleasant speeches and happy remarks all the way, now owned to Aliena that he was so weary, he could find in his heart to disgrace his man's apparel, and cry like a woman; and Aliena declared she could go no farther; and then again Ganymede tried to recollect that it was a man's duty to comfort and console a woman, as the weaker vessel; and to seem courageous to his new sister, he said, " Come, have a good heart, my sister Aliena; we are now at the end of our travel, in the forest of Arden." But feigned manliness and forced courage would no longer support them; for though they were in the forest of Arden, they knew not where to find the duke: and here the travel of these weary ladies might have come to a sad conclusion, for they might have lost themselves, and perished for want of food; but providentially, as they were sitting on the grass, almost dying with fatigue and hopeless of any relief, a countryman chanced to pass that way, and Ganymede once more tried to speak with a manly boldness, saying, " Shepherd, if love or gold can in this desert place procure us entertainment, I pray you bring us where we may rest ourselves; for this young maid, my sister, is much fatigued with travelling, and faints for want of food."

The man replied that he was only a servant to a shepherd, and that his master's house was just going to be sold, and therefore they would find but poor entertainment; but that if they would go with him, they should be welcome to what there was. They followed the man, the near prospect of relief giving them fresh strength; and bought the house and sheep of the shepherd, and took the man who conducted them to the shepherd's house to wait on them; and being by this means so fortunately provided with a neat cottage, and well supplied with provisions, they agreed to stay here till they could learn in what part of the forest the duke dwelt.

When they were rested after the fatigue of their journey, they began to like their new way of life, and almost fancied themselves the shepherd and shepherdess they feigned to be; yet sometimes Ganymede remembered he had once been the same lady Rosalind who had so dearly loved the brave Orlando, because he was the son of old Sir Rowland, her father's friend; and though Ganymede thought that Orlando was many miles distant, even so many weary miles as they had travelled, yet it soon appeared that Orlando was also in the forest of Arden: and in this manner this strange event came to pass.

Orlando was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, who, when he died, left him (Orlando being then very young) to the care of his eldest brother Oliver, charging Oliver on his blessing to give his brother a good education, and provide for him as became the dignity of their ancient house. Oliver proved an unworthy brother; and disregarding the commands of his dying father, he never put his brother to school, but kept him at home untaught and entirely neglected. But in his nature and in the noble qualities of his mind Orlando so much resembled his excellent father, that without any advantages of education he seemed like a youth who had been bred with the utmost care; and Oliver so envied the fine person and dignified manners of his untutored brother, that at last he wished to destroy him; and to effect this he set on people to persuade him to wrestle with the famous wrestler, who, as has been before related, had killed so many men. Now, it was this cruel brother's neglect of him which made Orlando say he wished to die, being so friendless.

When, contrary to the wicked hopes he had formed, his brother proved victorious, his envy and malice knew no bounds, and he swore he would burn the chamber where Orlando slept. He was overheard making this vow by one that had been an old and faithful servant to their father, and that loved Orlando because he resembled Sir Rowland. This old man went out to meet him when he returned from the duke's palace, and when he saw Orlando, the peril his dear young master was in made him break out into these passionate exclamations: "O my gentle master, my sweet master, O you memory of old Sir Rowland! why are you virtuous? why are you gentle, strong, and valiant? and why would you be so fond to overcome the famous wrestler? Your praise is come too swiftly home before you." Orlando, wondering what all this meant, asked him what was the matter. And then the old man told him how his wicked brother, envying the love all people bore him, and now hearing the fame he had gained by his victory in the duke's palace, intended to destroy him, by setting fire to his chamber that night; and in conclusion, advised him to escape the danger he was in by instant flight; and knowing Orlando had no money, Adam (for that was the good old man's name) had brought out with him his own little hoard, and he said, "I have five hundred crowns, the thrifty hire I saved under your father, and laid by to be provision for me when my old limbs should become unfit for service; take that, and he that doth the ravens feed be comfort to my age! Here is the gold; all this I give to you: let me be your servant; though I look old I will do the service of a younger man in all your business and necessities." "O good old man!" said Orlando, "how well appears in you the constant service of the old world! You are not for the fashion of these times. We will go along together, and before your youthful wages are spent, I shall light upon some means for both our maintenance."

Together then this faithful servant and his loved master set out; and Orlando and Adam travelled on, uncertain what course to pursue, till they came to the forest of Arden, and there they found themselves in the same distress for want of food that Ganymede and Aliena had been. They wandered on, seeking some human habitation, till they were almost spent with hunger and fatigue. Adam at last said, "O my dear master, I die for want of food, I can go no farther!" He then laid himself down, thinking to make that place his grave, and bade his dear master farewell. Orlando, seeing him in this weak state, took his old servant up in his arms, and carried him under the shelter of some pleasant trees; and he said to him, " Cheerly, old Adam, rest your weary limbs here awhile, and do not talk of dying! "

Orlando then searched about to find some food, and he happened to arrive at that part of the forest where the duke was; and he and his friends were just going to eat their dinner, this royal duke being seated on the grass, under no other canopy than the shady covert of some large trees.

Orlando, whom hunger had made desperate, drew his sword, intending to take their meat by force, and said, " Forbear and eat no more; I must have your food! " The duke asked him, if distress had made him so bold, or if he were a rude despiser of good manners? On this Orlando said, he was dying with hunger; and then the duke told him he was welcome to sit down and eat with them. Orlando hearing him speak so gently, put up his sword, and blushed with shame at the rude manner in which he had demanded their food. " Pardon me, I pray you," said he: " I thought that all things had been savage here, and therefore I put on the countenance of stern command; but whatever men you are, that in this desert, under the shade of melancholy boughs, lose and neglect the creeping hours of time; if ever you have looked on better days; if ever you have been where bells have knolled to church; if you have ever sat at any good man's feast; if ever from your eyelids you have wiped a tear, and know what it is to pity or be pitied, may gentle speeches now move you to do me human courtesy! " The duke replied, " True it is that we are men (as you say) who have seen better days, and though we have now our habitation in this wild forest, we have lived in towns and cities, and have with holy bell been knolled to church, have sat at good men's feasts, and from our eyes have wiped the drops which sacred pity has engendered; therefore sit you down, and take of our refreshment as much as will minister to your wants." " There is an old poor man," answered Orlando, " who has limped after me many a weary step in pure love, oppressed at once with two sad infirmities, age and hunger; till he be satisfied, I must not touch a bit." "Go, find him out, and bring him hither," said the duke; "we will forbear to eat till you return." Then Orlando went like a doe to find its fawn and give it food; and presently returned, bringing Adam in his arms; and the duke said, "Set down your venerable burthen; you are both welcome:" and they fed the old man, and cheered his heart, and he revived, and recovered his health and strength again.

The duke inquired who Orlando was; and when he found that he was the son of his old friend, Sir Rowland de Boys, he took him under his protection, and Orlando and his old servant lived with the duke in the forest.

Orlando arrived in the forest not many days after Ganymede and Aliena came there, and (as has been before related) bought the shepherd's cottage.

Ganymede and Aliena were strangely surprised to find the name of Rosalind carved on the trees, and love-sonnets, fastened to them, all addressed to Rosalind; and while they were wondering how this could be, they met Orlando, and they perceived the chain which Rosalind had given him about his neck.

Orlando little thought that Ganymede was the fair princess Rosalind, who, by her noble condescension and favour, had so won his heart that he passed his whole time in carving her name upon the trees, and writing sonnets in praise of her beauty: but being much pleased with the graceful air of this pretty shepherd-youth, he entered into conversation with him, and he thought he saw a likeness in Ganymede to his beloved Rosalind, but that he had none of the dignified deportment of that noble lady; for Ganymede assumed the forward manners often seen in youths when they are between boys and men, and with such archness and humour talked to Orlando of a certain lover, "who," said he, "haunts our forest, and spoils our young trees with carving Rosalind upon their barks; and he hangs odes upon hawthorns, and elegies on brambles, all praising this same Rosalind. If I could find this lover, I would give him some good counsel that would soon cure him of his love."

Orlando confessed that he was the fond lover of whom he spoke, and asked Ganymede to give him the good counsel he talked of. The remedy Ganymede proposed, and the counsel he gave him, was that Orlando should come every day to the cottage where he and his sister Aliena dwelt: " And then," said Ganymede, " I will feign myself to be Rosalind, and you shall feign to court me in the same manner as you would do if I was Rosalind, and then I will imitate the fantastic ways of whimsical ladies to their lovers, till I make you ashamed of your love; and this is the way I propose to cure you." Orlando had no great faith in the remedy, yet he agreed to come every day to Ganymede's cottage, and feign a playful courtship; and every day Orlando visited Ganymede and Aliena, and Orlando called the shepherd Ganymede his Rosalind, and every day talked over all the fine words and flattering compliments which young men delight to use when they court their mistresses. It does not appear, however, that Ganymede made any progress in curing Orlando of his love for Rosalind.

Though Orlando thought all this was but a sportive play (not dreaming that Ganymede was his very Rosalind), yet the opportunity it gave him of saying all the fond things he had in his heart, pleased his fancy almost as well as it did Ganymede's, who enjoyed the secret jest in knowing these fine love-speeches were all addressed to the right person.

In this manner many days passed pleasantly on with these young people; and the good-natured Aliena, seeing it made Ganymede happy, let him have his own way, and was diverted at the mock-courtship, and did not care to remind Ganymede that the lady Rosalind had not yet made herself known to the duke her father, whose place of resort in the forest they had learnt from Orlando. Ganymede met the duke one day, and had some talk with him, and the duke asked of what parentage he came. Ganymede answered that he came of as good parentage as he did, which made the duke smile, for he did not suspect the pretty shepherd-boy came of royal lineage.

Then seeing the duke look well and happy, Ganymede was content to put off all further explanation for a few days longer.

One morning, as Orlando was going to visit Ganymede, he saw a man lying asleep on the ground, and a large green snake had twisted itself about his neck. The snake, seeing Orlando approach, glided away among the bushes. Orlando went nearer, and then he discovered a lioness lie crouching, with her head on the ground, with a cat-like watch, waiting until the sleeping man awaked (for it is said that lions will prey on nothing that is dead or sleeping). It seemed as if Orlando was sent by Providence to free the man from the danger of the snake and lioness; but when Orlando looked in the man's face, he perceived that the sleeper who was exposed to this double peril, was his own brother Oliver, who had so cruelly used him, and had threatened to destroy him by fire; and he was almost tempted to leave him a prey to the hungry lioness; but brotherly affection and the gentleness of his nature soon overcame his first anger against his brother; and he drew his sword, and attacked the lioness, and slew her, and thus preserved his brother's life both from the venomous snake and from the furious lioness; but before Orlando could conquer the lioness, she had torn one of his arms with her sharp claws.

While Orlando was engaged with the lioness, Oliver awaked, and perceiving that his brother Orlando, whom he had so cruelly treated, was saving him from the fury of a wild beast at the risk of his own life, shame and remorse at once seized him, and he repented of his unworthy conduct, and besought with many tears his brother's pardon for the injuries he had done him. Orlando rejoiced to see him so penitent, and readily forgave him: they embraced each other; and from that hour Oliver loved Orlando with a true brotherly affection, though he had come to the forest bent on his destruction.

The wound in Orlando's arm having bled very much, he found himself too weak to go to visit Ganymede, and therefore desired his brother to go and tell Ganymede, "whom," said Orlando, "I in sport do call my Rosalind," the accident which had befallen him.

Thither then Oliver went, and told to Ganymede and Aliena how Orlando had saved his life: and when he had finished the story of Orlando's bravery, and his own providential escape, he owned to them that he was Orlando's brother, who had so cruelly used him; and then he told them of their reconciliation.

The sincere sorrow that Oliver expressed for his offences made such a lively impression on the kind heart of Aliena, that she instantly fell in love with him; and Oliver observing how much she pitied the distress he told her he felt for his fault, he as suddenly fell in love with her. But while love was thus stealing into the hearts of Aliena and Oliver, he was no less busy with Ganymede, who hearing of the danger Orlando had been in, and that he was wounded by the lioness, fainted; and when he recovered, he pretended that he had counterfeited the swoon in the imaginary character of Rosalind, and Ganymede said to Oliver, "Tell your brother Orlando how well I counterfeited a swoon." But Oliver saw by the paleness of his complexion that he did really faint, and much wondering at the weakness of the young man, he said, "Well, if you did counterfeit, take a good heart, and counterfeit to be a man." "So I do," replied Ganymede, truly, "but I should have been a woman by right."

Oliver made this visit a very long one, and when at last he returned back to his brother, he had much news to tell him; for besides the account of Ganymede's fainting at the hearing that Orlando was wounded, Oliver told him how he had fallen in love with the fair shepherdess Aliena, and that she had lent a favourable ear to his suit, even in this their first interview; and he talked to his brother, as of a thing almost settled, that he should marry Aliena, saying, that he so well loved her, that he would live here as a shepherd, and settle his estate and house at home upon Orlando.

"You have my consent," said Orlando. "Let your wedding be to-morrow, and I will invite the duke and his friends. Go and persuade your shepherdess to agree to this: she is now alone; for look, here comes her brother." Oliver went to Aliena; and Ganymede, whom Orlando had perceived approaching, came to inquire after the health of his wounded friend.

When Orlando and Ganymede began to talk over the sudden love which had taken place between Oliver and Aliena, Orlando said he had advised his brother to persuade his fair shepherdess to be married on the morrow, and then he added how much he could wish to be married on the same day to his Rosalind.

Ganymede, who well approved of this arrangement said that if Orlando really loved Rosalind as well as he professed to do, he should have his wish; for on the morrow he would engage to make Rosalind appear in her own person, and also that Rosalind should be willing to marry Orlando.

This seemingly wonderful event, which, as Ganymede was the lady Rosalind, he could so easily perform, he pretended he would bring to pass by the aid of magic, which he said he had learnt of an uncle who was a famous magician.

The fond lover Orlando, half believing and half doubting what he heard, asked Ganymede if he spoke in sober meaning. "By my life I do," said Ganymede; "therefore put on your best clothes, and bid the duke and your friends to your wedding; for if you desire to be married to-morrow to Rosalind, she shall be here."

The next morning, Oliver having obtained the consent of Aliena, they came into the presence of the duke, and with them also came Orlando.

They being all assembled to celebrate this double marriage, and as yet only one of the brides appearing, there was much of wondering and conjecture, but they mostly thought that Ganymede was making a jest of Orlando.

The duke, hearing that it was his own daughter that was to be brought in this strange way, asked Orlando if he believed the shepherd-boy could really do what he had promised; and while Orlando was answering that he knew not what to think, Ganymede entered, and asked the duke, if he brought his daughter, whether he would consent to her marriage with Orlando. "That I would," said the duke, "if I had kingdoms to give with her." Ganymede then said to Orlando, "And you say you will marry her if I bring her here." "That I would," said Orlando, "if I were king of many kingdoms."

Ganymede and Aliena then went out together, and Ganymede throwing off his male attire, and being once more dressed in woman's apparel, quickly became Rosalind without the power of magic; and Aliena changing her country garb for her own rich clothes, was with as little trouble transformed into the lady Celia.

While they were gone, the duke said to Orlando, that he thought the shepherd Ganymede very like his daughter Rosalind; and Orlando said, he also had observed the resemblance.

They had no time to wonder how all this would end, for Rosalind and Celia in their own clothes entered; and no longer pretending that it was by the power of magic that she came here, Rosalind threw herself on her knees before her father, and begged his blessing. It seemed so wonderful to all present that she should so suddenly appear, that it might well have passed for magic; but Rosalind would no longer trifle with her father, and told him the story of her banishment, and of her dwelling in the forest as a shepherd-boy, her cousin Celia passing as her sister.

The duke ratified the consent he had already given to the marriage; and Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, were married at the same time. And though their wedding could not be celebrated in this wild forest with any of the parade or splendour usual on such occasions, yet a happier wedding-day was never passed: and while they were eating their venison under the cool shade of the pleasant trees, as if nothing should be wanting to complete the felicity of this good duke and the true lovers, an unexpected messenger arrived to tell the duke the joyful news, that his dukedom was restored to him.

The usurper, enraged at the flight of his daughter Celia, and hearing that every day men of great worth resorted to the forest of Arden to join the lawful duke in his exile, much envying that his brother should be so highly respected in his adversity, put himself at the head of a large force, and advanced towards the forest, intending to seize his brother, and put him with all his faithful followers to the sword; but, by a wonderful interposition of Providence, this bad brother was converted from his evil intention; for just as he entered the skirts of the wild forest, he was met by an old religious man, a hermit, with whom he had much talk, and who in the end completely turned his heart from his wicked design. Thenceforward he became a true penitent, and resolved, relinquishing his unjust dominion, to spend the remainder of his days in a religious house. The first act of his newly-conceived penitence was to send a messenger to his brother (as has been related) to offer to restore to him his dukedom, which he had usurped so long, and with it the lands and revenues of his friends, the faithful followers of his adversity.

This joyful news, as unexpected as it was welcome, came opportunely to heighten the festivity and rejoicings at the wedding of the princesses. Celia complimented her cousin on this good fortune which had happened to the duke, Rosalind's father, and wished her joy very sincerely, though she herself was no longer heir to the dukedom, but by this restoration which her father had made, Rosalind was now the heir: so completely was the love of these two cousins unmixed with anything of jealousy or of envy.

The duke had now an opportunity of rewarding those true friends who had stayed with him in his banishment; and these worthy followers, though they had patiently shared his adverse fortune, were very well pleased to return in peace and prosperity to the palace of their lawful duke.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

THERE lived in the city of Verona two young gentlemen, whose names were Valentine and Proteus, between whom a firm and uninterrupted friendship had long subsisted. They pursued their studies together, and their hours of leisure were always passed in each other's company, except when Proteus visited a lady he was in love with; and these visits to his mistress, and this passion of Proteus for the fair Julia, were the only topics on which these two friends disagreed; for Valentine, not being himself a lover, was sometimes a little weary of hearing his friend for ever talking of his Julia, and then he would laugh at Proteus, and in pleasant terms ridicule the passion of love, and declare that no such idle fancies should ever enter his head, greatly preferring (as he said) the free and happy life he led, to the anxious hopes and fears of the lover Proteus.

One morning Valentine came to Proteus to tell him that they must for a time be separated, for that he was going to Milan. Proteus, unwilling to part with his friend, used many arguments to prevail upon Valentine not to leave him: but Valentine said, "Cease to persuade me, my loving Proteus. I will not, like a sluggard, wear out my youth in idleness at home. Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits. If your affection were not chained to the sweet glances of your honoured Julia, I would entreat you to accompany me, to see the wonders of the world abroad; but since you are a lover, love on still, and may your love be prosperous!"

They parted with mutual expressions of unalterable friendship. "Sweet Valentine, adieu!" said Proteus; "think on me, when you see some rare object worthy of notice in your travels, and wish me partaker of your happiness."

Valentine began his journey that same day towards Milan; and when his friend had left him, Proteus sat down to write a letter to Julia, which he gave to her maid Lucetta to deliver to her mistress.

Julia loved Proteus as well as he did her, but she was a lady of a noble spirit, and she thought it did not become her maiden dignity too easily to be won; therefore she affected to be insensible of his passion, and gave him much uneasiness in the prosecution of his suit.

And when Lucetta offered the letter to Julia, she would not receive it, and chid her maid for taking letters from Proteus, and ordered her to leave the room. But she so much wished to see what was written in the letter, that she soon called in her maid again; and when Lucetta returned, she said, "What o'clock is it?" Lucetta, who knew her mistress more desired to see the letter than to know the time of day, without answering her question, again offered the rejected letter. Julia, angry that her maid should thus take the liberty of seeming to know what she really wanted, tore the letter in pieces, and threw it on the floor, ordering her maid once more out of the room. As Lucetta was retiring, she stopped to pick up the fragments of the torn letter; but Julia, who meant not so to part with them, said, in pretended anger, "Go, get you gone, and let the papers lie; you would be fingering them to anger me."

Julia then began to piece together as well as she could the torn fragments. She first made out these words, "Love-wounded Proteus;" and lamenting over these and such like loving words, which she made out though they were all torn asunder, or, she said *wounded* (the expression "Love-wounded Proteus" giving her that idea), she talked to these kind words, telling them she would lodge them in her bosom as in a bed, till their wounds were healed, and that she would kiss each several piece, to make amends.

In this manner she went on talking with a pretty lady-like childishness, till finding herself unable to make out the whole, and vexed at her own ingratitude in destroying such sweet and loving words, as she called them, she wrote a much kinder letter to Proteus than she had ever done before.

Proteus was greatly delighted at receiving this favourable answer to his letter; and while he was reading it, he exclaimed, " Sweet love, sweet lines, sweet life! " In the midst of his raptures he was interrupted by his father. " How now! " said the old gentleman; " what letter are you reading there? "

" My lord," replied Proteus, " it is a letter from my friend Valentine, at Milan."

" Lend me the letter," said his father: " let me see what news."

" There are no news, my lord," said Proteus, greatly alarmed, " but that he writes how well beloved he is of the duke of Milan, who daily graces him with favours; and how he wishes me with him, the partner of his fortune."

" And how stand you affected to his wish? " asked the father.

" As one relying on your lordship's will, and not depending on his friendly wish," said Proteus.

Now it had happened that Proteus' father had just been talking with a friend on this very subject: his friend had said, he wondered his lordship suffered his son to spend his youth at home, while most men were sending their sons to seek preferment abroad; " some," said he, " to the wars, to try their fortunes there, and some to discover islands far away, and some to study in foreign universities; and there is his companion Valentine, he is gone to the duke of Milan's court. Your son is fit for any of these things, and it will be a great disadvantage to him in his riper age not to have travelled in his youth."

Proteus' father thought the advice of his friend was very good, and upon Proteus telling him that Valentine " wished him with him, the partner of his fortune," he at once determined to send his son to Milan; and without giving Proteus any reason for this sudden resolution, it being the usual habit of this positive old gentleman to command his son, not reason with him, he said, " My will is the same as Valentine's wish; " and seeing his son look astonished, he added, "Look not amazed, that I so suddenly resolve you shall spend some time in the duke of Milan's court; for what I will I will, and there is an end. To-morrow be in readiness to go. Make no excuses; for I am peremptory."

Proteus knew it was of no use to make objections to his father, who never suffered him to dispute his will; and he blamed himself for telling his father an untruth about Julia's letter, which had brought upon him the sad necessity of leaving her.

Now that Julia found she was going to lose Proteus for so long a time, she no longer pretended indifference; and they bade each other a mournful farewell, with many vows of love and constancy. Proteus and Julia exchanged rings, which they both promised to keep for ever in remembrance of each other; and thus, taking a sorrowful leave, Proteus set out on his journey to Milan, the abode of his friend Valentine.

Valentine was in reality what Proteus had feigned to his father, in high favour with the duke of Milan; and another event had happened to him, of which Proteus did not even dream, for Valentine had given up the freedom of which he used so much to boast, and was become as passionate a lover as Proteus.

She who had wrought this wondrous change in Valentine was the lady Silvia, daughter of the duke of Milan, and she also loved him; but they concealed their love from the duke, because although he showed much kindness for Valentine, and invited him every day to his palace, yet he designed to marry his daughter to a young courtier whose name was Thurio. Silvia despised this Thurio, for he had none of the fine sense and excellent qualities of Valentine.

These two rivals, Thurio and Valentine, were one day on a visit to Silvia, and Valentine was entertaining Silvia with turning everything Thurio said into ridicule, when the duke himself entered the room, and told Valentine the welcome news of his friend Proteus' arrival. Valentine said, "If I had wished a thing, it would have been to have seen him here!" And then he highly praised Proteus to the duke, saying, "My lord, though I have been a truant of my time, yet hath my friend made use and fair advantage of his days, and is complete in person and in mind, in all good grace to grace a gentleman."

"Welcome him then according to his worth," said the duke. "Silvia, I speak to you, and you, Sir Thurio; for Valentine, I need not bid him do so." They were here interrupted by the entrance of Proteus, and Valentine introduced him to Silvia, saying, "Sweet lady, entertain him to be my fellow-servant to your ladyship."

When Valentine and Proteus had ended their visit, and were alone together, Valentine said, "Now tell me how all does from whence you came? How does your lady, and how thrives your love?" Proteus replied, "My tales of love used to weary you. I know you joy not in a love discourse."

"Ay, Proteus," returned Valentine, "but that life is altered now. I have done penance for condemning love. For in revenge of my contempt of love, love has chased sleep from my enthralled eyes. O gentle Proteus, Love is a mighty lord, and hath so humbled me, that I confess there is no woe like his correction, nor no such joy on earth as in his service. I now like no discourse except it be of love. Now I can break my fast, dine, sup, and sleep, upon the very name of love."

This acknowledgment of the change which love had made in the disposition of Valentine was a great triumph to his friend Proteus. But "friend" Proteus must be called no longer, for the same all-powerful deity Love, of whom they were speaking (yea, even while they were talking of the change he had made in Valentine), was working in the heart of Proteus; and he, who had till this time been a pattern of true love and perfect friendship, was now, in one short interview with Silvia, become a false friend and a faithless lover; for at the first sight of Silvia all his love for Julia vanished away like a dream, nor did his long friendship for Valentine deter him from endeavouring to supplant him in her affections; and although, as it will always be, when people of dispositions naturally good become unjust, he had many scruples before he determined to forsake Julia, and become the rival of Valentine; yet he at length overcame his sense of duty, and yielded himself up, almost without remorse, to his new unhappy passion.

Valentine imparted to him in confidence the whole history of his love, and how carefully they had concealed it from the duke her father, and told him, that, despairing of ever being able to obtain his consent, he had prevailed upon Silvia to leave her father's palace that night, and go with him to Mantua; then he showed Proteus a ladder of ropes, by help of which he meant to assist Silvia to get out of one of the windows of the palace after it was dark.

Upon hearing this faithful recital of his friend's dearest secrets, it is hardly possible to be believed, but so it was, that Proteus resolved to go to the duke, and disclose the whole to him.

This false friend began his tale with many artful speeches to the duke, such as that by the laws of friendship he ought to conceal what he was going to reveal, but that the gracious favour the duke had shown him, and the duty he owed his grace, urged him to tell that which else no worldly good should draw from him. He then told all he had heard from Valentine, not omitting the ladder of ropes, and the manner in which Valentine meant to conceal them under a long cloak.

The duke thought Proteus quite a miracle of integrity, in that he preferred telling his friend's intention rather than he would conceal an unjust action, highly commended him, and promised him not to let Valentine know from whom he had learnt this intelligence, but by some artifice to make Valentine betray the secret himself. For this purpose the duke awaited the coming of Valentine in the evening, whom he soon saw hurrying towards the palace, and he perceived somewhat was wrapped within his cloak, which he concluded was the rope-ladder.

The duke upon this stopped him, saying, "Whither away so fast, Valentine?"—"May it please your grace," said Valentine, "there is a messenger that stays to bear my letters to my friends, and I am going to deliver them." Now this falsehood of Valentine's had no better success in the event than the untruth Proteus told his father.

"Be they of much import?" said the duke.

"No more, my lord," said Valentine, "than to tell my father I am well and happy at your grace's court."

"Nay then," said the duke, "no matter; stay with me a while. I wish your counsel about some affairs that concern me nearly." He then told Valentine an artful story, as a prelude to draw his secret from him, saying that Valentine knew he wished to match his daughter with Thurio, but that she was stubborn and disobedient to his commands, "neither regarding," said he, "that she is my child, nor fearing me as if I were her father. And I may say to thee, this pride of hers has drawn my love from her. I had thought my age should have been cherished by her childlike duty. I now am resolved to take a wife, and turn her out to whosoever will take her in. Let her beauty be her wedding dower, for me and my possessions she esteems not."

Valentine, wondering where all this would end, made answer, "And what would your grace have me to do in all this?"

"Why," said the duke, "the lady I would wish to marry is nice and coy, and does not much esteem my aged eloquence. Besides, the fashion of courtship is much changed since I was young: now I would willingly have you to be my tutor to instruct me how I am to woo."

Valentine gave him a general idea of the modes of courtship then practised by young men, when they wished to win a fair lady's love, such as presents, frequent visits, and the like.

The duke replied to this, that the lady did refuse a present which he sent her, and that she was so strictly kept by her father, that no man might have access to her by day.

"Why then," said Valentine, "you must visit her by night."

"But at night," said the artful duke, who was now coming to the drift of his discourse, "her doors are fast locked."

Valentine then unfortunately proposed that the duke should get into the lady's chamber at night by means of a ladder of ropes, saying he would procure him one fitting for that purpose; and in conclusion advised him to conceal this ladder of ropes under such a cloak as that which he now wore. "Lend me your cloak," said the duke, who had feigned this long story on purpose to have a pretence to get off the cloak; so upon saying these words, he caught hold of Valentine's cloak, and throwing it back, he discovered not only the ladder of ropes, but also a letter of Silvia's, which he instantly opened and read; and this letter contained a full account of their intended elopement. The duke, after upbraiding Valentine for his ingratitude in thus returning the favour he had shown him, by endeavouring to steal away his daughter, banished him from the court and city of Milan for ever; and Valentine was forced to depart that night, without even seeing Silvia.

While Proteus at Milan was thus injuring Valentine, Julia at Verona was regretting the absence of Proteus; and her regard for him at last so far overcame her sense of propriety, that she resolved to leave Verona, and seek her lover at Milan; and to secure herself from danger on the road, she dressed her maiden Lucetta and herself in men's clothes, and they set out in this disguise, and arrived at Milan soon after Valentine was banished from that city through the treachery of Proteus.

Julia entered Milan about noon, and she took up her abode at an inn; and her thoughts being all on her dear Proteus, she entered into conversation with the innkeeper, or host, as he was called, thinking by that means to learn some news of Proteus.

The host was greatly pleased that this handsome young gentleman (as he took her to be), who from his appearance he concluded was of high rank, spoke so familiarly to him; and being a good-natured man, he was sorry to see him look so melancholy; and to amuse his young guest, he offered to take him to hear some fine music, with which, he said, a gentleman that evening was going to serenade his mistress.

The reason Julia looked so very melancholy was, that she did not well know what Proteus would think of the imprudent step she had taken; for she knew he had loved her for her noble maiden pride and dignity of character, and she feared she should lower herself in his esteem: and this it was that made her wear a sad and thoughtful countenance.

She gladly accepted the offer of the host to go with him, and hear the music; for she secretly hoped she might meet Proteus by the way.

But when she came to the palace whither the host conducted her, a very different effect was produced to what the kind host intended; for there, to her heart's sorrow, she beheld her lover, the inconstant Proteus, serenading the lady Silvia with music, and addressing discourse of love and admiration to her. And Julia overheard Silvia from a window talk with Proteus, and reproach him for forsaking his own true lady, and for his ingratitude to his friend Valentine; and then Silvia left the window, not choosing to listen to his music and his fine speeches; for she was a faithful lady to her banished Valentine, and abhorred the ungenerous conduct of his false friend Proteus.

Though Julia was in despair at what she had just witnessed, yet did she still love the truant Proteus; and hearing that he had lately parted with a servant, she contrived with the assistance of her host, the friendly innkeeper, to hire herself to Proteus as a page; and Proteus knew not she was Julia, and he sent her with letters and presents to her rival Silvia, and he even sent by her the very ring she gave him as a parting gift at Verona.

When she went to that lady with the ring, she was most glad to find that Silvia utterly rejected the suit of Proteus; and Julia, or the page Sebastian as she was called, entered into conversation with Silvia about Proteus' first love, the forsaken lady Julia. She putting in (as one may say) a good word for herself, said she knew Julia, as well she might, being herself the Julia of whom she spoke; telling how fondly Julia loved her master Proteus, and how his unkind neglect would grieve her: and then she with a pretty equivocation went on: "Julia is about my height, and of my complexion, the colour of her eyes and hair the same as mine:" and indeed Julia looked a most beautiful youth in her boy's attire. Silvia was moved to pity this lovely lady, who was so sadly forsaken by the man she loved; and when Julia offered the ring which Proteus had sent, refused it, saying, "The more shame for him that he sends me that ring; I will not take it; for I have often heard him say his Julia gave it to him. I love thee, gentle youth, for pitying her, poor lady! Here is a purse; I give it you for Julia's sake." These comfortable words coming from her kind rival's tongue cheered the drooping heart of the disguised lady.

But to return to the banished Valentine; who scarce knew which way to bend his course, being unwilling to return home to his father a disgraced and banished man: as he was wandering over a lonely forest, not far distant from Milan, where he had left his heart's dear treasure, the lady Silvia, he was set upon by robbers, who demanded his money.

Valentine told them that he was a man crossed by adversity, that he was going into banishment, and that he had no money, the clothes he had on being all his riches.

The robbers, hearing that he was a distressed man, and being struck with his noble air and manly behaviour, told him if he would live with them, and be their chief, or captain, they would put themselves under his command; but that if he refused to accept their offer they would kill him.

Valentine, who cared little what became of himself, said he would consent to live with them and be their captain, provided they did no outrage on women or poor passengers.

Thus the noble Valentine became, like Robin Hood, of whom we read in ballads, a captain of robbers and outlawed banditti; and in this situation he was found by Silvia, and in this manner it came to pass.

Silvia, to avoid a marriage with Thurio, whom her father insisted upon her no longer refusing, came at last to the resolution of following Valentine to Mantua, at which place she had heard her lover had taken refuge; but in this account she was misinformed, for he still lived in the forest among the robbers, bearing the name of their captain, but taking no part in their depredations, and using the authority which they had imposed upon him in no other way than to compel them to show compassion to the travellers they robbed.

Silvia contrived to effect her escape from her father's palace in company with a worthy old gentleman, whose name was Eglamour, whom she took along with her for protection on the road. She had to pass through the forest where Valentine and the banditti dwelt; and one of these robbers seized on Silvia, and would also have taken Eglamour, but he escaped.

The robber who had taken Silvia, seeing the terror she was in, bid her not be alarmed, for that he was only going to carry her to a cave where his captain lived, and that she need not be afraid, for their captain had an honourable mind, and always showed humanity to women. Silvia found little comfort in hearing she was going to be carried as a prisoner before the captain of a lawless banditti. "O Valentine," she cried, "this I endure for thee!"

But as the robber was conveying her to the cave of his captain, he was stopped by Proteus, who, still attended by Julia in the disguise of a page, having heard of the flight of Silvia, had traced her steps to this forest. Proteus now rescued her from the hands of the robber; but scarce had she time to thank him for the service he had done her, before he began to distress her afresh with his love suit; and while he was rudely pressing her to consent to marry him, and his page (the forlorn Julia) was standing beside him in great anxiety of mind, fearing lest the great service which Proteus had just done to Silvia should win her to show him some favour, they were all strangely surprised with the sudden appearance of Valentine, who, having heard his robbers had taken a lady prisoner, came to console and relieve her.

Proteus was courting Silvia, and he was so much ashamed of being caught by his friend, that he was all at once seized with penitence and remorse; and he expressed such a lively sorrow for the injuries he had done to Valentine, that Valentine, whose nature was noble and generous, even to a romantic degree, not only forgave and restored him to his former place in his friendship, but in a sudden flight of heroism he said, "I freely do forgive you; and all the interest I have in Silvia, I give it up to you." Julia, who was standing beside her master as a page, hearing this strange offer, and fearing Proteus would not be able with this new-found virtue to refuse Silvia, fainted, and they were all employed in recovering her: else would Silvia have been offended at being thus made over to Proteus, though she could scarcely think that Valentine would long persevere in this overstrained and too generous act of friendship. When Julia recovered from the fainting fit, she said, "I had forgot, my master ordered me to deliver this ring to Silvia." Proteus, looking upon the ring, saw that it was the one he gave to Julia, in return for that which he received from her, and which he had sent by the supposed page to Silvia. "How is this?" said he, "this is Julia's ring: how came you by it, boy?" Julia answered, "Julia herself did give it me, and Julia herself hath brought it hither."

Proteus, now looking earnestly upon her, plainly perceived that the page Sebastian was no other than the lady Julia herself; and the proof she had given of her constancy and true love so wrought in him, that his love for her returned into his heart, and he took again his own dear lady, and joyfully resigned all pretensions to the lady Silvia to Valentine, who had so well deserved her.

Proteus and Valentine were expressing their happiness in their reconciliation, and in the love of their faithful ladies when they were surprised with the sight of the duke of Milan and Thurio, who came there in pursuit of Silvia.

Thurio first approached, and attempted to seize Silvia, saying, "Silvia is mine." Upon this Valentine said to him in a very spirited manner, "Thurio, keep back: if once again you say that Silvia is yours, you shall embrace your death. Here she stands, take but possession of her with a torch! I dare you but to breathe upon my love." Hearing this threat, Thurio, who was a great coward, drew back, and said he cared not for her, and that none but a fool would fight for a girl who loved him not.

The duke, who was a very brave man himself, said now in great anger, "The more base and degenerate in you to take such means for her as you have done, and leave her on such slight conditions." Then turning to Valentine, he said, "I do applaud your spirit, Valentine, and think you worthy of an empress' love. You shall have Silvia, for you have well deserved her." Valentine then with great humility kissed the duke's hand, and accepted the noble present which he had made him of his daughter with becoming thankfulness: taking occasion of this joyful minute to entreat the good-humoured duke to pardon the thieves with whom he had associated in the forest, assuring him, that when reformed and restored to society, there would be found among them many good, and fit for great employment; for the most of them had been banished, like Valentine, for state offences, rather than for any black crimes they had been guilty of. To this the ready duke consented: and now nothing remained but that Proteus, the false friend, was ordained, by way of penance for his love-prompted faults, to be present at the recital of the whole story of his loves and falsehoods before the duke; and the shame of the recital to his awakened conscience was judged sufficient punishment: which being done, the lovers, all four, returned back to Milan, and their nuptials were solemnised in the presence of the duke, with high triumphs and feasting.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

SHYLOCK, the Jew, lived at Venice: he was an usurer, who had amassed an immense fortune by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants. Shylock, being a hard-hearted man, exacted the payment of the money he lent with such severity that he was much disliked by all good men, and particularly by Antonio, a young merchant of Venice; and Shylock as much hated Antonio, because he used to lend money to people in distress, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore there was great enmity between this covetous Jew and the generous merchant Antonio. Whenever Antonio met Shylock on the Rialto (or Exchange), he used to reproach him with his usuries and hard dealings, which the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly meditated revenge.

Antonio was the kindest man that lived, the best conditioned, and had the most unwearied spirit in doing courtesies; indeed, he was one in whom the ancient Roman honour more appeared than in any that drew breath in Italy. He was greatly beloved by all his fellow-citizens; but the friend who was nearest and dearest to his heart was Bassanio, a noble Venetian, who, having but a small patrimony, had nearly exhausted his little fortune by living in too expensive a manner for his slender means, as young men of high rank with small fortunes are too apt to do. Whenever Bassanio wanted money, Antonio assisted him; and it seemed as if they had but one heart and one purse between them.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio, and told him that he wished to repair his fortune by a wealthy marriage with a lady whom he dearly loved, whose father, that was lately dead, had left her sole heiress to a large estate; and that in her father's lifetime he used to visit at her house, when he thought he had observed this lady had sometimes from her eyes sent speechless messages, that seemed to say he would be no unwelcome suitor; but not having money to furnish himself with an appearance befitting the lover of so rich an heiress, he besought Antonio to add to the many favours he had shown him, by lending him three thousand ducats.

Antonio had no money by him at that time to lend his friend; but expecting soon to have some ships come home laden with merchandise, he said he would go to Shylock, the rich money-lender, and borrow the money upon the credit of those ships.

Antonio and Bassanio went together to Shylock, and Antonio asked the Jew to lend him three thousand ducats upon any interest he should require, to be paid out of the merchandise contained in his ships at sea. On this, Shylock thought within himself, "If I can once catch him on the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him; he hates our Jewish nation; he lends out money gratis, and among the merchants he rails at me and my well-earned bargains, which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!" Antonio finding he was musing within himself and did not answer, and being impatient for the money, said, "Shylock, do you hear? will you lend the money?" To this question the Jew replied, "Signior Antonio, on the Rialto many a time and often you have railed at me about my monies and my usuries, and I have borne it with a patient shrug, for sufferance is the badge of all our tribe; and then you have called me unbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spit upon my Jewish garments, and spurned at me with your foot, as if I was a cur. Well then, it now appears you need my help; and you come to me, and say, *Shylock, lend me monies.* Has a dog money? Is it possible a cur should lend three thousand ducats? Shall I bend low and say, Fair sir, you spit upon me on Wednesday last, another time you called me dog, and for these courtesies I am to lend you monies." Antonio replied, "I am as like to call you so again, to spit on you again, and spurn you too. If you will lend me this money, lend it not to me as to a friend, but rather lend it to me as to an enemy, that, if I break, you may with better face exact the penalty."—"Why, look you," said Shylock, "how you storm! I would be friends with you, and have your love. I will forget the shames you have put upon me. I will supply your wants, and take no interest for my money." This seemingly kind offer greatly surprised Antonio; and then Shylock, still pretending kindness, and that all he did was to gain Antonio's love, again said he would lend him the three thousand ducats, and take no interest for his money; only Antonio should go with him to a lawyer, and there sign in merry sport a bond, that if he did not repay the money by a certain day, he would forfeit a pound of flesh, to be cut off from any part of his body that Shylock pleased.

"Content," said Antonio: "I will sign to this bond, and say there is much kindness in the Jew."

Bassanio said Antonio should not sign to such a bond for him; but still Antonio insisted that he would sign it, for that before the day of payment came, his ships would return laden with many times the value of the money.

Shylock, hearing this debate, exclaimed, "O, father Abraham, what suspicious people these Christians are! Their own hard dealings teach them to suspect the thoughts of others. I pray you tell me this, Bassanio: if he should break his day, what should I gain by the exaction of the forfeiture? A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man, is not so estimable, nor profitable neither, as the flesh of mutton or beef. I say, to buy his favour I offer this friendship: if he will take it, so; if not, adieu."

At last, against the advice of Bassanio, who, notwithstanding all the Jew had said of his kind intentions, did not like his friend should run the hazard of this shocking penalty for his sake, Antonio signed the bond, thinking it really was (as the Jew said) merely in sport.

The rich heiress that Bassanio wished to marry lived near Venice, at a place called Belmont: her name was Portia, and in the graces of her person and her mind she was nothing inferior to that Portia, of whom we read, who was Cato's daughter, and the wife of Brutus.

Bassanio being so kindly supplied with money by his friend Antonio, at the hazard of his life, set out for Belmont with a splendid train, and attended by a gentleman of the name of Gratiano.

Bassanio proving successful in his suit, Portia in a short time consented to accept of him for a husband.

Bassanio confessed to Portia that he had no fortune, and that his high birth and noble ancestry was all that he could boast of; she, who loved him for his worthy qualities, and had riches enough not to regard wealth in a husband, answered with a graceful modesty, that she would wish herself a thousand times more fair, and ten thousand times more rich, to be more worthy of him; and then the accomplished Portia prettily dispraised herself, and said she was an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised, yet not so old but that she could learn, and that she would commit her gentle spirit to be directed and governed by him in all things; and she said, "Myself and what is mine, to you and yours is now converted. But yesterday, Bassanio, I was the lady of this fair mansion, queen of myself, and mistress over these servants; and now this house, these servants, and myself, are yours, my lord; I give them with this ring;" presenting a ring to Bassanio.

Bassanio was so overpowered with gratitude and wonder at the gracious manner in which the rich and noble Portia accepted of a man of his humble fortune, that he could not express his joy and reverence to the dear lady who so honoured him, by anything but broken words of love and thankfulness; and taking the ring, he vowed never to part with it.

Gratiano and Nerissa, Portia's waiting-maid, were in attendance upon their lord and lady, when Portia so gracefully promised to become the obedient wife of Bassanio; and Gratiano, wishing Bassanio and the generous lady joy, desired permission to be married at the same time.

"With all my heart, Gratiano," said Bassanio, "if you can get a wife."

Gratiano then said that he loved the lady Portia's fair waiting gentlewoman Nerissa, and that she had promised to be his wife, if her lady married Bassanio. Portia asked Nerissa if this was true. Nerissa replied, "Madam, it is so, if you approve of it." Portia willingly consenting, Bassanio pleasantly said, "Then our wedding-feast shall be much honoured by your marriage, Gratiano."

The happiness of these lovers was sadly crossed at this moment by the entrance of a messenger, who brought a letter from Antonio containing fearful tidings. When Bassanio read Antonio's letter, Portia feared it was to tell him of the death of some dear friend, he looked so pale; and inquiring what was the news which had so distressed him, he said, "O sweet Portia, here are a few of the unpleasantest words that ever blotted paper; gentle lady, when I first imparted my love to you, I freely told you all the wealth I had ran in my veins; but I should have told you that I had less than nothing, being in debt." Bassanio then told Portia what has been here related, of his borrowing the money of Antonio, and of Antonio's procuring it of Shylock the Jew, and of the bond by which Antonio had engaged to forfeit a pound of flesh, if it was not repaid by a certain day: and then Bassanio read Antonio's letter; the words of which were, *"Sweet Bassanio, my ships are all lost, my bond to the Jew is forfeited, and since in paying it is impossible I should live, I could wish to see you at my death; notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love for me do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."* "O, my dear love," said Portia, "despatch all business, and begone; you shall have gold to pay the money twenty times over, before this kind friend shall lose a hair by my Bassanio's fault; and as you are so dearly bought, I will dearly love you." Portia then said she would be married to Bassanio before he set out, to give him a legal right to her money; and that same day they were married, and Gratiano was also married to Nerissa; and Bassanio and Gratiano, the instant they were married, set out in great haste for Venice, where Bassanio found Antonio in prison.

The day of payment being past, the cruel Jew would not accept of the money which Bassanio offered him, but insisted upon having a pound of Antonio's flesh. A day was appointed to try this shocking cause before the Duke of Venice, and Bassanio awaited in dreadful suspense the event of the trial.

When Portia parted with her husband, she spoke cheeringly to him, and bade him bring his dear friend along with him when he returned; yet she feared it would go hard with Antonio, and when she was left alone, she began to think and consider within herself, if she could by any means be instrumental in saving the life of her dear Bassanio's friend; and notwithstanding when she wished to honour her Bassanio, she had said to him with such a meek and wife-like grace, that she would submit in all things to be governed by his superior wisdom, yet being now called forth into action by the peril of her honoured husband's friend, she did nothing doubt her own powers, and by the sole guidance of her own true and perfect judgment, at once resolved to go herself to Venice, and speak in Antonio's defence.

Portia had a relation who was a counsellor in the law; to this gentleman, whose name was Bellario, she wrote, and stating the case to him, desired his opinion, and that with his advice he should also send her the dress worn by a counsellor. When the messenger returned, he brought letters from Bellario of advice how to proceed, and also everything necessary for her equipment.

Portia dressed herself and her maid Nerissa in men's apparel, and putting on the robes of a counsellor, she took Nerissa along with her as her clerk; and setting out immediately, they arrived at Venice on the very day of the trial. The cause was just going to be heard before the duke and senators of Venice in the senate-house, when Portia entered this high court of justice, and presented a letter from Bellario, in which that learned counsellor wrote to the duke, saying, he would have come himself to plead for Antonio, but that he was prevented by sickness, and he requested that the learned young doctor Balthasar (so he called Portia) might be permitted to plead in his stead. This the duke granted, much wondering at the youthful appearance of the stranger, who was prettily disguised by her counsellor's robes and her large wig.

And now began this important trial. Portia looked around her, and she saw the merciless Jew; and she saw Bassanio, but he knew her not in her disguise. He was standing beside Antonio, in an agony of distress and fear for his friend.

The importance of the arduous task Portia had engaged in gave this tender lady courage, and she boldly proceeded in the duty she had undertaken to perform: and first of all she addressed herself to Shylock; and allowing that he had a right by the Venetian law to have the forfeit expressed in the bond, she spoke so sweetly of the noble quality of *mercy,* as would have softened any heart but the unfeeling Shylock's; saying, that it dropped as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; and how mercy was a double blessing, it blessed him that gave, and him that received it; and how it became monarchs better than their crowns, being an attribute of God himself; and that earthly power came nearest to God's, in proportion as mercy tempered justice; and she bid Shylock remember that as we all pray for mercy, that same prayer should teach us to show mercy. Shylock only answered her by desiring to have the penalty forfeited in the bond. "Is he not able to pay the money?" asked Portia. Bassanio then offered the Jew the payment of the three thousand ducats as many times over as he should desire; which Shylock refusing, and still insisting upon having a pound of Antonio's flesh, Bassanio begged the learned young counsellor would endeavour to wrest the law a little, to save Antonio's life. But Portia gravely answered, that laws once established must never be altered. Shylock hearing Portia say that the law might not be altered, it seemed to him that she was pleading in his favour, and he said, "A Daniel is come to judgment! O wise young judge, how I do honour you! How much elder are you than your looks!"

Portia now desired Shylock to let her look at the bond; and when she had read it, she said, "This bond is forfeited, and by this the Jew may lawfully claim a pound of flesh, to be by him cut off nearest Antonio's heart." Then she said to Shylock, "Be merciful: take the money, and bid me tear the bond." But no mercy would the cruel Shylock show; and he said, "By my soul I swear, there is no power in the tongue of man to alter me."—"Why then, Antonio," said Portia, "you must prepare your bosom for the knife:" and while Shylock was sharpening a long knife with great eagerness to cut off the pound of flesh, Portia said to Antonio, "Have you anything to say?" Antonio with a calm resignation replied, that he had but little to say, for that he had prepared his mind for death. Then he said to Bassanio, "Give me your hand, Bassanio! Fare you well! Grieve not that I am fallen into this misfortune for you. Commend me to your honourable wife, and tell her how I have loved you!" Bassanio in the deepest affliction replied, "Antonio, I am married to a wife, who is as dear to me as life itself; but life itself, my wife, and all the world, are not esteemed with me above your life: I would lose all, I would sacrifice all to this devil here, to deliver you."

Portia hearing this, though the kind-hearted lady was not at all offended with her husband for expressing the love he owed to so true a friend as Antonio in these strong terms, yet could not help answering, "Your wife would give you little thanks, if she were present, to hear you make this offer." And then Gratiano, who loved to copy what his lord did, thought he must make a speech like Bassanio's, and he said, in Nerissa's hearing, who was writing in her clerk's dress by the side of Portia, "I have a wife, whom I protest I love; I wish she were in heaven, if she could but entreat some power there to change the cruel temper of this currish Jew." "It is well you wish this behind her back, else you would have but an unquiet house," said Nerissa.

Shylock now cried out impatiently, "We trifle time; I pray pronounce the sentence." And now all was awful expectation in the court, and every heart was full of grief for Antonio.

Portia asked if the scales were ready to weigh the flesh; and she said to the Jew, "Shylock, you must have some surgeon by, lest he bleed to death." Shylock, whose whole intent was that Antonio should bleed to death, said, "It is not so named in the bond."

M. L. Kirk
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Portia replied, "It is not so named in the bond, but what of that? It were good you did so much for charity." To this all the answer Shylock would make was, "I cannot find it; it is not in the bond." "Then," said Portia, "a pound of Antonio's flesh is thine. The law allows it, and the court awards it. And you may cut this flesh off his breast. The law allows it and the court awards it." Again Shylock exclaimed, "O wise and upright judge! A Daniel is come to judgment!" And then he sharpened his long knife again, and looking eargerly on Antonio, he said, "Come, prepare!"

"Tarry a little, Jew," said Portia; "there is something else. This bond here gives you no drop of blood; the words expressly are, 'a pound of flesh.' If in the cutting off the pound of flesh you shed one drop of Christian blood, your lands and goods are by the law to be confiscated to the state of Venice." Now as it was utterly impossible for Shylock to cut off the pound of flesh without shedding some of Antonio's blood, this wise discovery of Portia's, that it was flesh and not blood that was named in the bond, saved the life of Antonio; and all admiring the wonderful sagacity of the young counsellor, who had so happily thought of this expedient, plaudits resounded from every part of the senate-house; and Gratiano exclaimed, in the words which Shylock had used, "O wise and upright judge! mark, Jew, a Daniel is come to judgment!"

Shylock, finding himself defeated in his cruel intent, said with a disappointed look, that he would take the money; and Bassanio, rejoiced beyond measure at Antonio's unexpected deliverance, cried out, "Here is the money!" But Portia stopped him, saying, "Softly; there is no haste; the Jew shall have nothing but the penalty: therefore prepare, Shylock, to cut off the flesh; but mind you shed no blood: nor do not cut off more nor less than just a pound; be it more or less by one poor scruple, nay if the scale turn by the weight of a single hair, you are condemned by the laws of Venice to die, and all your wealth is forfeited to the senate." "Give me my money, and let me go," said Shylock. "I have it ready," said Bassanio: "here it is."

Shylock was going to take the money, when Portia again stopped him, saying, "Tarry, Jew; I have yet another hold upon you. By the laws of Venice, your wealth is forfeited to the state, for having conspired against the life of one of its citizens, and your life lies at the mercy of the duke; therefore, down on your knees, and ask him to pardon you."

The duke then said to Shylock, "That you may see the difference of our Christian spirit, I pardon you your life before you ask it; half your wealth belongs to Antonio, the other half comes to the state."

The generous Antonio then said that he would give up his share of Shylock's wealth, if Shylock would sign a deed to make it over at his death to his daughter and her husband; for Antonio knew that the Jew had an only daughter who had lately married against his consent to a young Christian, named Lorenzo, a friend of Antonio's, which had so offended Shylock, that he had disinherited her.

The Jew agreed to this: and being thus disappointed in his revenge, and despoiled of his riches, he said, "I am ill. Let me go home; send the deed after me, and I will sign over half my riches to my daughter."—"Get thee gone, then," said the duke, "and sign it; and if you repent your cruelty and turn Christian, the state will forgive you the fine of the other half of your riches."

The duke now released Antonio, and dismissed the court. He then highly praised the wisdom and ingenuity of the young counsellor, and invited him home to dinner. Portia, who meant to return to Belmont before her husband, replied, "I humbly thank your grace, but I must away directly." The duke said he was sorry he had not leisure to stay and dine with him; and turning to Antonio, he added, "Reward this gentleman; for in my mind you are much indebted to him."

The duke and his senators left the court; and then Bassanio said to Portia, "Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend Antonio have by your wisdom been this day acquitted of grievous penalties, and I beg you will accept of the three thousand ducats due unto the Jew."

" And we shall stand indebted to you over and above," said Antonio, " in love and service evermore."

Portia could not be prevailed upon to accept the money; but upon Bassanio still pressing her to accept of some reward, she said, " Give me your gloves; I will wear them for your sake; " and then Bassanio taking off his gloves, she espied the ring which she had given him upon his finger: now it was the ring the wily lady wanted to get from him to make a merry jest when she saw her Bassanio again, that made her ask him for his gloves; and she said, when she saw the ring, " and for your love I will take this ring from you." Bassanio was sadly distressed that the counsellor should ask him for the only thing he could not part with, and he replied in great confusion, that he could not give him that ring, because it was his wife's gift, and he had vowed never to part with it; but that he would give him the most valuable ring in Venice, and find it out by proclamation. On this Portia affected to be affronted, and left the court, saying, " You teach me, sir, how a beggar should be answered."

" Dear Bassanio," said Antonio, " let him have the ring; let my love and the great service he has done for me be valued against your wife's displeasure." Bassanio, ashamed to appear so ungrateful, yielded, and sent Gratiano after Portia with the ring; and then the *clerk* Nerissa, who had also given Gratiano a ring, she begged his ring, and Gratiano (not choosing to be outdone in generosity by his lord) gave it to her. And there was laughing among these ladies to think, when they got home, how they would tax their husbands with giving away their rings, and swear that they had given them as a present to some woman.

Portia, when she returned, was in that happy temper of mind which never fails to attend the consciousness of having performed a good action; her cheerful spirits enjoyed everything she saw: the moon never seemed to shine so bright before; and when that pleasant moon was hid behind a cloud, then a light which she saw from her house at Belmont as well pleased her charmed fancy, and she said to Nerissa, "That light we see is burning in my hall; how far that little candle throws its beams, so shines a good deed in a naughty world;" and hearing the sound of music from her house, she said, "Methinks that music sounds much sweeter than by day."

And now Portia and Nerissa entered the house, and dressing themselves in their own apparel, they awaited the arrival of their husbands, who soon followed them with Antonio; and Bassanio presenting his dear friend to the lady Portia, the congratulations and welcomings of that lady were hardly over, when they perceived Nerissa and her husband quarrelling in a corner of the room. "A quarrel already?" said Portia. "What is the matter?" Gratiano replied, "Lady, it is about a paltry gilt ring that Nerissa gave me, with the words upon it like the poetry on a cutler's knife; *Love me, and leave me not.*"

"What does the poetry or the value of the ring signify?" said Nerissa. "You swore to me when I gave it to you, that you would keep it till the hour of death; and now you say you gave it to the lawyer's clerk. I know you gave it to a woman."—"By this hand," replied Gratiano, "I gave it to a youth, a kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy, no higher than yourself; he was clerk to the young counsellor that by his wise pleading saved Antonio's life: this prating boy begged it for a fee, and I could not for my life deny him." Portia said, "You were to blame, Gratiano, to part with your wife's first gift. I gave my lord Bassanio a ring, and I am sure he would not part with it for all the world." Gratiano, in excuse for his fault, now said, "My lord Bassanio gave his ring away to the counsellor, and then the boy, his clerk, that took some pains in writing, he begged my ring."

Portia, hearing this, seemed very angry, and reproached Bassanio for giving away her ring; and she said, Nerissa had taught her what to believe, and that she knew some woman had the ring. Bassanio was very unhappy to have so offended his dear lady, and he said with great earnestness, "No, by my honour, no woman had it, but a civil doctor, who refused three thousand ducats of me, and begged the ring, which when I denied him, he went displeased away. What could I do, sweet Portia? I was so beset with shame for my seeming ingratitude, that I was forced to send the ring after him. Pardon me, good lady; had you been there, I think you would have begged the ring of me to give the worthy doctor."

"Ah!" said Antonio, "I am the unhappy cause of these quarrels."

Portia bid Antonio not to grieve at that, for that he was welcome notwithstanding; and then Antonio said, "I once did lend my body for Bassanio's sake; and but for him to whom your husband gave the ring, I should have now been dead. I dare be bound again, my soul upon the forfeit, your lord will never more break his faith with you."—"Then you shall be his surety," said Portia; "give him this ring, and bid him keep it better than the other."

When Bassanio looked at this ring, he was strangely surprised to find it was the same he gave away; and then Portia told him how she was the young counsellor, and Nerissa was her clerk; and Bassanio found, to his unspeakable wonder and delight, that it was by the noble courage and wisdom of his wife that Antonio's life was saved.

And Portia again welcomed Antonio, and gave him letters which by some chance had fallen into her hands, which contained an account of Antonio's ships, that were supposed lost, being safely arrived in the harbour. So these tragical beginnings of this rich merchant's story were all forgotten in the unexpected good fortune which ensued; and there was leisure to laugh at the comical adventure of the rings, and the husbands that did not know their own wives: Gratiano merrily swearing, in a sort of rhyming speech, that

——— while he lived, he'd fear no other thing
So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

CYMBELINE

DURING the time of Augustus Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, there reigned in England (which was then called Britain) a king whose name was Cymbeline.

Cymbeline's first wife died when his three children (two sons and a daughter) were very young. Imogen, the eldest of these children, was brought up in her father's court; but by a strange chance the two sons of Cymbeline were stolen out of their nursery, when the eldest was but three years of age, and the youngest quite an infant; and Cymbeline could never discover what was become of them, or by whom they were conveyed away.

Cymbeline was twice married: his second wife was a wicked, plotting woman, and a cruel step-mother to Imogen, Cymbeline's daughter by his first wife.

The queen, though she hated Imogen, yet wished her to marry a son of her own by a former husband (she also having been twice married): for by this means she hoped upon the death of Cymbeline to place the crown of Britain upon the head of her son Cloten; for she knew that, if the king's sons were not found, the princess Imogen must be the king's heir. But this design was prevented by Imogen herself, who married without the consent or even knowledge of her father or the queen.

Posthumus (for that was the name of Imogen's husband) was the best scholar and most accomplished gentleman of that age. His father died fighting in the wars for Cymbeline, and soon after his birth his mother died also for grief at the loss of her husband.

Cymbeline, pitying the helpless state of this orphan, took Posthumus (Cymbeline having given him that name, because he was born after his father's death), and educated him in his own court.

Imogen and Posthumus were both taught by the same masters, and were playfellows from their infancy; they loved each other tenderly when they were children, and their affection continuing to increase with their years, when they grew up they privately married.

The disappointed queen soon learnt this secret, for she kept spies constantly in watch upon the actions of her daughter-in-law, and she immediately told the king of the marriage of Imogen with Posthumus.

Nothing could exceed the wrath of Cymbeline, when he heard that his daughter had been so forgetful of her high dignity as to marry a subject. He commanded Posthumus to leave Britain, and banished him from his native country for ever.

The queen, who pretended to pity Imogen for the grief she suffered at losing her husband, offered to procure them a private meeting before Posthumus set out on his journey to Rome, which place he had chosen for his residence in his banishment: this seeming kindness she showed, the better to succeed in her future designs in regard to her son Cloten; for she meant to persuade Imogen, when her husband was gone, that her marriage was not lawful, being contracted without the consent of the king.

Imogen and Posthumus took a most affectionate leave of each other. Imogen gave her husband a diamond ring, which had been her mother's, and Posthumus promised never to part with the ring; and he fastened a bracelet on the arm of his wife, which he begged she would preserve with great care, as a token of his love; they then bid each other farewell, with many vows of everlasting love and fidelity.

Imogen remained a solitary and dejected lady in her father's court, and Posthumus arrived at Rome, the place he had chosen for his banishment.

Posthumus fell into company at Rome with some gay young men of different nations, who were talking freely of ladies: each one praising the ladies of his own country, and his own mistress. Posthumus, who had ever his own dear lady in his mind, affirmed that his wife, the fair Imogen, was the most virtuous, wise and constant lady in the world.

One of those gentlemen, whose name was Iachimo, being offended that a lady of Britain should be so praised above the Roman ladies, his country-women, provoked Posthumus by seeming to doubt the constancy of his so highly-praised wife; and at length, after much altercation, Posthumus consented to a proposal of Iachimo's, that he (Iachimo) should go to Britain, and endeavour to gain the love of the married Imogen. They then laid a wager, that if Iachimo did not succeed in this wicked design, he was to forfeit a large sum of money; but if he could win Imogen's favour, and prevail upon her to give him the bracelet which Posthumus had so earnestly desired she would keep as a token of his love, then the wager was to terminate with Posthumus giving to Iachimo the ring, which was Imogen's love present when she parted with her husband. Such firm faith had Posthumus in the fidelity of Imogen, that he thought he ran no hazard in this trial of her honour.

Iachimo, on his arrival in Britain, gained admittance, and a courteous welcome from Imogen, as a friend of her husband; but when he began to make professions of love to her, she repulsed him with disdain, and he soon found that he could have no hope of succeeding in his dishonourable design.

The desire Iachimo had to win the wager made him now have recourse to a stratagem to impose upon Posthumus, and for this purpose he bribed some of Imogen's attendants, and was by them conveyed into her bedchamber, concealed in a large trunk, where he remained shut up till Imogen was retired to rest, and had fallen asleep; and then getting out of the trunk, he examined the chamber with great attention, and wrote down everything he saw there, and particularly noticed a mole which he observed upon Imogen's neck, and then softly unloosing the bracelet from her arm, which Posthumus had given to her, he retired into the chest again; and the next day he set off for Rome with great expedition, and boasted to Posthumus that Imogen had given him the bracelet, and likewise permitted him to pass a night in her chamber: and in this manner Iachimo told his false tale: " Her bedchamber," said he, " was hung with tapestry of silk and silver, the story was *the proud Cleopatra when she met her Antony,* a piece of work most bravely wrought."

" This is true," said Posthumus; " but this you might have heard spoken of without seeing."

" Then the chimney," said Iachimo, " is south of the chamber, and the chimney-piece is *Diana bathing;* never saw I figures livelier expressed."

" This is a thing you might have likewise heard," said Posthumus; " for it is much talked of."

Iachimo as accurately described the roof of the chamber; and added, " I had almost forgot her andirons; they were *two winking Cupids* made of silver, each on one foot standing." He then took out the bracelet, and said, " Know you this jewel, sir? She gave me this. She took it from her arm. I see her yet; her pretty action did outsell her gift, and yet enriched it too. She gave it me, and said, *she prized it once.*" He last of all described the mole he had observed upon her neck.

Posthumus, who had heard the whole of this artful recital in an agony of doubt, now broke out into the most passionate exclamations against Imogen. He delivered up the diamond ring to Iachimo, which he had agreed to forfeit to him, if he obtained the bracelet from Imogen.

Posthumus then in a jealous rage wrote to Pisanio, a gentleman of Britain, who was one of Imogen's attendants, and had long been a faithful friend to Posthumus; and after telling him what proof he had of his wife's disloyalty, he desired Pisanio would take Imogen to Milford-Haven, a seaport of Wales, and there kill her. And at the same time he wrote a deceitful letter to Imogen, desiring her to go with Pisanio, for that finding he could live no longer without seeing her, though he was forbidden upon pain of death to return to Britain, he would come to Milford-Haven, at which place he begged she would meet him. She, good unsuspecting lady, who loved her husband above all things, and desired more than her life to see him, hastened her departure with Pisanio, and the same night she received the letter she set out.

When their journey was nearly at an end, Pisanio, who, though faithful to Posthumus, was not faithful to serve him in an evil deed, disclosed to Imogen the cruel order he had received.

Imogen, who, instead of meeting a loving and beloved husband, found herself doomed by that husband to suffer death, was afflicted beyond measure.

Pisanio persuaded her to take comfort, and wait with patient fortitude for the time when Posthumus should see and repent his injustice: in the meantime, as she refused in her distress to return to her father's court, he advised her to dress herself in boy's clothes for more security in travelling; to which advice she agreed, and thought in that disguise she would go over to Rome, and see her husband, whom, though he had used her so barbarously, she could not forget to love.

When Pisanio had provided her with her new apparel, he left her to her uncertain fortune, being obliged to return to court; but before he departed he gave her a phial of cordial, which he said the queen had given him as a sovereign remedy in all disorders.

The queen, who hated Pisanio because he was a friend to Imogen and Posthumus, gave him this phial, which she supposed contained poison, she having ordered her physician to give her some poison, to try its effects (as she said) upon animals; but the physician, knowing her malicious disposition, would not trust her with real poison, but gave her a drug which would do no other mischief than causing a person to sleep with every appearance of death for a few hours. This mixture, which Pisanio thought a choice cordial, he gave to Imogen, desiring her, if she found herself ill upon the road to take it; and so, with blessings and prayers for her safety and happy deliverance from her undeserved troubles, he left her.

Providence strangely directed Imogen's steps to the dwelling of her two brothers, who had been stolen away in their infancy. Bellarius, who stole them away, was a lord in the court of Cymbeline, and having been falsely accused to the king of treason, and banished from the court, in revenge he stole away the two sons of Cymbeline, and brought them up in a forest, where he lived concealed in a cave. He stole them through revenge, but he soon loved them as tenderly as if they had been his own children, educated them carefully, and they grew up fine youths, their princely spirits leading them to bold and daring actions; and as they subsisted by hunting, they were active and hardy, and were always pressing their supposed father to let them seek their fortune in the wars.

At the cave where these youths dwelt it was Imogen's fortune to arrive. She had lost her way in a large forest, through which her road lay to Milford-Haven (from which she meant to embark for Rome) ; and being unable to find any place where she could purchase food, she was with weariness and hunger almost dying; for it is not merely putting on a man's apparel that will enable a young lady, tenderly brought up, to bear the fatigue of wandering about lonely forests like a man. Seeing this cave, she entered, hoping to find some one within of whom she could procure food. She found the cave empty, but looking about she discovered some cold meat, and her hunger was so pressing, that she could not wait for an invitation, but sat down and began to eat. "Ah," said she, talking to herself, "I see a man's life is a tedious one; how tired am I! for two nights together I have made the ground my bed: my resolution helps me, or I should be sick. When Pisanio showed me Milford-Haven from the mountain top, how near it seemed!" Then the thoughts of her husband and his cruel mandate came across her, and she said, "My dear Posthumus, thou art a false one!"

The two brothers of Imogen, who had been hunting with their reputed father, Bellarius, were by this time returned home. Bellarius had given them the names of Polydore and Cadwal, and they knew no better, but supposed that Bellarius was their father; but the real names of these princes were Guiderius and Arviragus.

Bellarius entered the cave first, and seeing Imogen, stopped them, saying, " Come not in yet; it eats our victuals, or I should think it was a fairy."

" What is the matter, sir?" said the young men. " By Jupiter," said Bellarius again, " there is an angel in the cave, or if not, an earthly paragon." So beautiful did Imogen look in her boy's apparel.

She, hearing the sound of voices, came forth from the cave, and addressed them in these words: " Good masters, do not harm me; before I entered your cave, I had thought to have begged or bought what I have eaten. Indeed I have stolen nothing, nor would I, though I had found gold strewed on the floor. Here is money for my meat, which I would have left on the board when I had made my meal, and parted with prayers for the provider." They refused her money with great earnestness. " I see you are angry with me," said the timid Imogen; " but, sirs, if you kill me for my fault, know that I should have died if I had not made it."

" Whither are you bound?" asked Bellarius, " and what is your name?"

" Fidele is my name," answered Imogen. " I have a kinsman, who is bound for Italy; he embarked at Milford-Haven, to whom being going, almost spent with hunger, I am fallen into this offence."

" Prithee, fair youth," said old Bellarius, " do not think us churls, nor measure our good minds by this rude place we live in. You are well encountered; it is almost night. You shall have better cheer before you depart, and thanks to stay and eat it. Boys, bid him welcome."

The gentle youths, her brothers, then welcomed Imogen to their cave with many kind expressions, saying they would love her (or, as they said, *him*) as a brother; and they entered the cave, where (they having killed venison when they were hunting) Imogen delighted them with her neat housewifery, assisting them in preparing their supper; for though it is not the custom now for young women of high birth to understand cookery, it was then, and Imogen excelled in this useful art; and, as her brothers prettily expressed it, Fidele cut their roots in characters, and sauced their broth, as if Juno had been sick, and Fidele were her dieter. "And then," said Polydore to his brother, "how angel-like he sings!"

They also remarked to each other, that though Fidele smiled so sweetly, yet so sad a melancholy did overcloud his lovely face, as if grief and patience had together taken possession of him.

For these her gentle qualities (or perhaps it was their near relationship, though they knew it not) Imogen (or, as the boys called her, *Fidele*) became the doting-piece of her brothers, and she scarcely less loved them, thinking that but for the memory of her dear Posthumus, she could live and die in the cave with these wild forest youths; and she gladly consented to stay with them, till she was enough rested from the fatigue of travelling to pursue her way to Milford-Haven.

When the venison they had taken was all eaten and they were going out to hunt for more, Fidele could not accompany them because she was unwell. Sorrow, no doubt, for her husband's cruel usage, as well as the fatigue of wandering in the forest, was the cause of her illness.

They then bid her farewell, and went to their hunt, praising all the way the noble parts and graceful demeanour of the youth Fidele.

Imogen was no sooner left alone than she recollected the cordial Pisanio had given her, and drank it off, and presently fell into a sound and deathlike sleep.

When Bellarius and her brothers returned from hunting, Polydore went first into the cave, and supposing her asleep, pulled off his heavy shoes, that he might tread softly and not awake her; so did true gentleness spring up in the minds of these princely foresters; but he soon discovered that she could not be awakened by any noise, and concluded her to be dead, and Polydore lamented over her with dear and brotherly regret, as if they had never from their infancy been parted.

Bellarius also proposed to carry her out into the forest, and there celebrate her funeral with songs and solemn dirges, as was then the custom.

Imogen's two brothers then carried her to a shady covert, and there laying her gently on the grass, they sang repose to her departed spirit, and covering her over with leaves and flowers, Polydore said, " While summer lasts and I live here, Fidele, I will daily strew thy grave. The pale primrose, that flower most like thy face; the blue-bell, like thy clear veins; and the leaf of eglantine, which is not sweeter than was thy breath; all these will I strew over thee. Yea, and the furred moss in winter, when there are no flowers to cover thy sweet corse."

When they had finished her funeral obsequies they departed very sorrowful.

Imogen had not been long left alone, when, the effect of the sleepy drug going off, she awaked, and easily shaking off the slight covering of leaves and flowers they had thrown over her, she arose, and imagining she had been dreaming, she said, " I thought I was a cave-keeper, and cook to honest creatures; how came I here covered with flowers? " Not being able to find her way back to the cave, and seeing nothing of her new companions, she concluded it was certainly all a dream; and once more Imogen set out on her weary pilgrimage, hoping at last she should find her way to Milford-Haven, and thence get a passage in some ship bound for Italy; for all her thoughts were still with her husband Posthumus, whom she intended to seek in the disguise of a page.

But great events were happening at this time, of which Imogen knew nothing; for a war had suddenly broken out between the Roman emperor Augustus Cæsar and Cymbeline, the king of Britain; and a Roman army had landed to invade Britain, and was advanced into the very forest over which Imogen was journeying. With this army came Posthumus.

Though Posthumus came over to Britain with the Roman army, he did not mean to fight on their side against his own countrymen, but intended to join the army of Britain, and fight in the cause of his king who had banished him.

He still believed Imogen false to him; yet the death of her he had so fondly loved, and by his own orders too (Pisanio having written him a letter to say he had obeyed his command, and that Imogen was dead), sat heavy on his heart, and therefore he returned to Britain, desiring either to be slain in battle, or to be put to death by Cymbeline for returning home from banishment.

Imogen, before she reached Milford-Haven, fell into the hands of the Roman army; and her presence and deportment recommending her, she was made a page to Lucius, the Roman general.

Cymbeline's army now advanced to meet the enemy, and when they entered this forest, Polydore and Cadwal joined the king's army. The young men were eager to engage in acts of valour, though they little thought they were going to fight for their own royal father: and old Bellarius went with them to the battle. He had long since repented of the injury he had done to Cymbeline in carrying away his sons; and having been a warrior in his youth, he gladly joined the army to fight for the king he had so injured.

And now a great battle commenced between the two armies, and the Britons would have been defeated, and Cymbeline himself killed, but for the extraordinary valour of Posthumus and Bellarius and the two sons of Cymbeline. They rescued the king, and saved his life, and so entirely turned the fortune of the day, that the Britons gained the victory.

When the battle was over, Posthumus, who had not found the death he sought for, surrendered himself up to one of the officers of Cymbeline, willing to suffer the death which was to be his punishment if he returned from banishment.

Imogen and the master she served were taken prisoners, and brought before Cymbeline, as was also her old enemy Iachimo, who was an officer in the Roman army; and when these prisoners were before the king, Posthumus was brought in to receive his sentence of death; and at this strange juncture of time, Bellarius with Polydore and Cadwal were also brought before Cymbeline, to receive the rewards due to the great services they had by their valour done for the king. Pisanio, being one of the king's attendants, was likewise present.

Therefore there were now standing in the king's presence (but with very different hopes and fears) Posthumus and Imogen, with her new master, the Roman general; the faithful servant Pisanio, and the false friend Iachimo; and likewise the two lost sons of Cymbeline, with Bellarius, who had stolen them away.

The Roman general was the first who spoke; the rest stood silent before the king, though there was many a beating heart among them.

Imogen saw Posthumus, and knew him, though he was in the disguise of a peasant; but he did not know her in her male attire: and she knew Iachimo, and she saw a ring on his finger which she perceived to be her own, but she did not know him as yet to have been the author of all her troubles: and she stood before her own father a prisoner of war.

Pisanio knew Imogen, for it was he who had dressed her in the garb of a boy. "It is my mistress," thought he; "since she is living, let the time run on to good or bad." Bellarius knew her too, and softly said to Cadwal, "Is not this boy revived from death?"—"One sand," replied Cadwal, "does not more resemble another than that sweet rosy lad is like the dead Fidele."—"The same dead thing alive," said Polydore. "Peace, peace," said Bellarius; "if it were he, I am sure he would have spoken to us."—"But we saw him dead," again whispered Polydore. "Be silent," replied Bellarius.

Posthumus waited in silence to hear the welcome sentence of his own death; and he resolved not to disclose to the king that he had saved his life in the battle, lest that should move Cymbeline to pardon him.

Lucius, the Roman general, who had taken Imogen under his protection as his page, was the first (as has been before said) who spoke to the king. He was a man of high courage and noble dignity, and this was his speech to the king: —

"I hear you take no ransom for your prisoners, but doom them all to death: I am a Roman, and with a Roman heart will suffer death. But there is one thing for which I would entreat." Then bringing Imogen before the king, he said, "This boy is a Briton born. Let him be ransomed. He is my page. Never master had a page so kind, so duteous, so diligent on all occasions, so true, so nurse-like. He hath done no Briton wrong, though he hath served a Roman. Save him, if you spare no one beside."

Cymbeline looked earnestly on his daughter Imogen. He knew her not in that disguise; but it seemed that all-powerful Nature spake in his heart, for he said, "I have surely seen him, his face appears familiar to me. I know not why or wherefore I say, Live, boy; but I give you your life, and ask of me what boon you will, and I will grant it you. Yea, even though it be the life of the noblest prisoner I have."

"I humbly thank your highness," said Imogen.

What was then called granting a boon was the same as a promise to give any one thing, whatever it might be, that the person on whom that favour was conferred chose to ask for. They all were attentive to hear what thing the page would ask for; and Lucius her master said to her, "I do not beg my life, good lad, but I know that is what you will ask for."—"No, no, alas!" said Imogen, "I have other work in hand, good master; your life I cannot ask for."

This seeming want of gratitude in the boy astonished the Roman general.

Imogen then, fixing her eye on Iachimo, demanded no other boon than this: that Iachimo should be made to confess whence he had the ring he wore on his finger.

Cymbeline granted her this boon, and threatened Iachimo with the torture if he did not confess how he came by the diamond ring on his finger.

Iachimo then made a full acknowledgment of all his villany, telling, as has been before related, the whole story of his wager with Posthumus, and how he had succeeded in imposing upon his credulity.

What Posthumus felt at hearing this proof of the innocence of his lady cannot be expressed. He instantly came forward, and confessed to Cymbeline the cruel sentence which he had enjoined Pisanio to execute upon the princess; exclaiming wildly, " O Imogen, my queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen, Imogen, Imogen!"

Imogen could not see her beloved husband in this distress without discovering herself, to the unutterable joy of Posthumus, who was thus relieved from a weight of guilt and woe, and restored to the good graces of the dear lady he had so cruelly treated.

Cymbeline, almost as much overwhelmed as he with joy, at finding his lost daughter so strangely recovered, received her to her former place in his fatherly affection, and not only gave her husband Posthumus his life, but consented to acknowledge him for his son-in-law.

Bellarius chose this time of joy and reconciliation to make his confession. He presented Polydore and Cadwal to the king, telling him they were his two lost sons, Guiderius and Arviragus.

Cymbeline forgave old Bellarius; for who could think of punishments at a season of such universal happiness? To find his daughter living, and his lost sons in the persons of his young deliverers, that he had seen so bravely fight in his defence, was unlooked-for joy indeed!

Imogen was now at leisure to perform good services for her late master, the Roman general Lucius, whose life the king her father readily granted at her request; and by the mediation of the same Lucius a peace was concluded between the Romans and the Britons, which was kept inviolate many years.

How Cymbeline's wicked queen, through despair of bringing her projects to pass, and touched with remorse of conscience, sickened and died, having first lived to see her foolish son Cloten slain in a quarrel which he had provoked, are events too tragical to interrupt this happy conclusion by more than merely touching upon. It is sufficient that all were made happy who were deserving; and even the treacherous Iachimo, in consideration of his villany having missed its final aim, was dismissed without punishment.

KING LEAR

LEAR, king of Britain, had three daughters; Goneril, wife to the duke of Albany; Regan, wife to the duke of Cornwall; and Cordelia, a young maid, for whose love the king of France and duke of Burgundy were joint suitors, and were at this time making stay for that purpose in the court of Lear.

The old king, worn out with age and the fatigues of government, he being more than fourscore years old, determined to take no further part in state affairs, but to leave the management to younger strengths, that he might have time to prepare of death, which must at no long period ensue. With this intent he called his three daughters to him, to know from their own lips which of them loved him best, that he might part his kingdom among them in such proportions as their affection for him should seem to deserve.

Goneril, the eldest, declared that she loved her father more than words could give out, that he was dearer to her than the light of her own eyes, dearer than life and liberty, with a deal of such professing stuff, which is easy to counterfeit where there is no real love, only a few fine words delivered with confidence being wanted in that case. The king, delighted to hear from her own mouth this assurance of her love, and thinking truly that her heart went with it, in a fit of fatherly fondness bestowed upon her and her husband one third of his ample kingdom.

Then calling to him his second daughter, he demanded what she had to say. Regan, who was made of the same hollow metal as her sister, was not a whit behind in her professions, but rather declared that what her sister had spoken came short of the love which she professed to bear for his highness; insomuch that she found all other joys dead, in comparison with the pleasure which she took in the love of her dear king and father.

Lear blessed himself in having such loving children, as he thought; and could do no less, after the handsome assurances which Regan had made, than bestow a third of his kingdom upon her and her husband, equal in size to that which he had already given away to Goneril.

Then turning to his youngest daughter Cordelia, whom he called his joy, he asked what she had to say, thinking no doubt that she would glad his ears with the same loving speeches which her sisters had uttered, or rather that her expressions would be so much stronger than theirs, as she had always been his darling, and favoured by him above either of them. But Cordelia, disgusted with the flattery of her sisters, whose hearts she knew were far from their lips, and seeing that all their coaxing speeches were only intended to wheedle the old king out of his dominions, that they and their husbands might reign in his lifetime, made no other reply but this,— that she loved his majesty according to her duty, neither more nor less.

The king, shocked with this appearance of ingratitude in his favourite child, desired her to consider her words, and to mend her speech, lest it should mar her fortunes.

Cordelia then told her father, that he was her father, that he had given her breeding, and loved her; that she returned those duties back as was most fit, and did obey him, love him, and most honour him. But that she could not frame her mouth to such large speeches as her sisters had done, or promise to love nothing else in the world. Why had her sisters husbands, if (as they said) they had no love for anything but their father? If she should ever wed, she was sure the lord to whom she gave her hand would want half her love, half of her care and duty; she should never marry like her sisters, to love her father all.

Cordelia, who in earnest loved her old father even almost as extravagantly as her sisters pretended to do, would have plainly told him so at any other time, in more daughter-like and loving terms, and without these qualifications, which did indeed sound a little ungracious; but after the crafty flattering speeches of her sisters, which she had seen drawn such extravagant rewards, she thought the handsomest thing she could do was to love and be silent. This put her affection out of suspicion of mercenary ends, and showed that she loved, but not for gain; and that her professions, the less ostentatious they were, had so much the more of truth and sincerity than her sisters'.

This plainness of speech, which Lear called pride, so enraged the old monarch — who in his best of times always showed much of spleen and rashness, and in whom the dotage incident to old age had so clouded over his reason, that he could not discern truth from flattery, nor a gay painted speech from words that came from the heart — that in a fury of resentment he retracted the third part of his kingdom which yet remained, and which he had reserved for Cordelia, and gave it away from her, sharing it equally between her two sisters and their husbands, the dukes of Albany and Cornwall; whom he now called to him, and in presence of all his courtiers bestowing a coronet between them, invested them jointly with all the power, revenue, and execution of government, only retaining to himself the name of king; all the rest of royalty he resigned; with this reservation, that himself, with a hundred knights for his attendants, was to be maintained by monthly course in each of his daughters' palaces in turn.

So preposterous a disposal of his kingdom, so little guided by reason, and so much by passion, filled all his courtiers with astonishment and sorrow; but none of them had the courage to interpose between this incensed king and his wrath, except the earl of Kent, who was beginning to speak a good word for Cordelia, when the passionate Lear on pain of death commanded him to desist; but the good Kent was not so to be repelled. He had been ever loyal to Lear, whom he had honoured as a king, loved as a father, followed as a master; and he had never esteemed his life further than as a pawn to wage against his royal master's enemies, nor feared to lose it when Lear's safety was the motive; nor now that Lear was most his own enemy, did this faithful servant of the king forget his old principles, but manfully opposed Lear, to do Lear good; and was unmannerly only because Lear was mad. He had been a most faithful counsellor in times past to the king, and he besought him now, that he would see with his eyes (as he had done in many weighty matters), and go by his advice still; and in his best consideration recall this hideous rashness: for he would answer with his life, his judgment that Lear's youngest daughter did not love him least, nor were those empty-hearted whose low sound gave no token of hollowness. When power bowed to flattery, honour was bound to plainness. For Lear's threats, what could he do to him, whose life was already at his service? That should not hinder duty from speaking.

The honest freedom of this good earl of Kent only stirred up the king's wrath the more, and like a frantic patient who kills his physician, and loves his mortal disease, he banished this true servant, and allotted him but five days to make his preparations for departure; but if on the sixth his hated person was found within the realm of Britain, that moment was to be his death. And Kent bade farewell to the king, and said, that since he chose to show himself in such fashion, it was but banishment to stay there; and before he went, he recommended Cordelia to the protection of the gods, the maid who had so rightly thought, and so discreetly spoken; and only wished that her sisters' large speeches might be answered with deeds of love; and then he went, as he said, to shape his old course to a new country.

The king of France and duke of Burgundy were now called in to hear the determination of Lear about his youngest daughter, and to know whether they would persist in their courtship to Cordelia, now that she was under her father's displeasure, and had no fortune but her own person to recommend her: and the duke of Burgundy declined the match, and would not take her to wife upon such conditions; but the king of France, understanding what the nature of the fault had been which had lost her the love of her father, that it was only a tardiness of speech, and the not being able to frame her tongue to flattery like her sisters, took this young maid by the hand, and saying that her virtues were a dowry above a kingdom, bade Cordelia to take farewell of her sisters and of her father, though he had been unkind, and she should go with him, and be queen of him and of fair France, and reign over fairer possessions than her sisters: and he called the duke of Burgundy in contempt a waterish duke, because his love for this young maid had in a moment run all away like water.

Then Cordelia with weeping eyes took leave of her sisters, and besought them to love their father well, and make good their professions: and they sullenly told her not to prescribe to them, for they knew their duty; but to strive to content her husband, who had taken her (as they tauntingly expressed it) as Fortune's alms. And Cordelia with a heavy heart departed, for she knew the cunning of her sisters, and she wished her father in better hands than she was about to leave him in.

Cordelia was no sooner gone, than the devilish dispositions of her sisters began to show themselves in their true colours. Even before the expiration of the first month, which Lear was to spend by agreement with his eldest daughter Goneril, the old king began to find out the difference between promises and performances. This wretch having got from her father all that he had to bestow, even to the giving away of the crown from off his head, began to grudge even those small remnants of royalty which the old man had reserved to himself, to please his fancy with the idea of being still a king. She could not bear to see him and his hundred knights. Every time she met her father, she put on a frowning countenance; and when the old man wanted to speak with her, she would feign sickness, or anything to get rid of the sight of him; for it was plain that she esteemed his old age a useless burden, and his attendants an unnecessary expense: not only she herself slackened in her expressions of duty to the king, but by her example, and (it is to be feared) not without her private instructions, her very servants affected to treat him with neglect, and would either refuse to obey his orders, or still more contemptuously pretend not to hear them. Lear could not but perceive this alteration in the behaviour of his daughter, but he shut his eyes against it as long as he could, as people commonly are unwilling to believe the unpleasant consequences which their own mistakes and obstinacy have brought upon them.

True love and fidelity are no more to be estranged by *ill,* than falsehood and hollow-heartedness can be conciliated by *good, usage.* This eminently appears in the instance of the good earl of Kent, who, though banished by Lear, and his life made forfeit if he were found in Britain, chose to stay and abide all consequences, as long as there was a chance of his being useful to the king his master. See to what mean shifts and disguises poor loyalty is forced to submit sometimes; yet it counts nothing base or unworthy, so as it can but do service where it owes an obligation! In the disguise of a serving man, all his greatness and pomp laid aside, this good earl proffered his services to the king, who, not knowing him to be Kent in that disguise, but pleased with a certain plainness, or rather bluntness in his answers, which the earl put on (so different from that smooth oily flattery which he had so much reason to be sick of, having found the effects not answerable in his daughter), a bargain was quickly struck, and Lear took Kent into his service by the name of Caius, as he called himself, never suspecting him to be his once great favourite, the high and mighty earl of Kent.

This Caius quickly found means to show his fidelity and love to his royal master: for Goneril's steward that same day behaving in a disrespectful manner to Lear, and giving him saucy looks and language, as no doubt he was secretly encouraged to do by his mistress, Caius, not enduring to hear so open an affront put upon his majesty, made no more ado but presently tripped up his heels, and laid the unmannerly slave in the kennel; for which friendly service Lear became more and more attached to him.

Nor was Kent the only friend Lear had. In his degree, and as far as so insignificant a personage could show his love, the poor fool, or jester, that had been of his palace while Lear had a palace, as it was the custom of kings and great personages at that time to keep a fool (as he was called) to make them sport after serious business: this poor fool clung to Lear after he had given away his crown, and by his witty sayings would keep up his good humour, though he could not refrain sometimes from jeering at his master for his imprudence in uncrowning himself, and giving all away to his daughters; at which time, as he rhymingly expressed it, these daughters

For sudden joy did weep
  And he for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep
  And go the fools among.

And in such wild sayings, and scraps of songs, of which he had plenty, this pleasant honest fool poured out his heart even in the presence of Goneril herself, in many a bitter taunt and jest which cut to the quick: such as comparing the king to the hedge-sparrow, who feeds the young of the cuckoo till they grow old enough, and then has its head bit off for its pains; and saying, that an ass may know when the cart draws the horse (meaning that Lear's daughters, that ought to go behind, now ranked before their father); and that Lear was no longer Lear, but the shadow of Lear: for which free speeches he was once or twice threatened to be whipped.

The coolness and falling off of respect which Lear had begun to perceive, were not all which this foolish fond father was to suffer from his unworthy daughter: she now plainly told him that his staying in her palace was inconvenient so long as he insisted upon keeping up an establishment of a hundred knights; that this establishment was useless and expensive, and only served to fill her court with riot and feasting; and she prayed him that he would lessen their number, and keep none but old men about him, such as himself, and fitting his age.

Lear at first could not believe his eyes or ears, nor that it was his daughter who spoke so unkindly. He could not believe that she who had received a crown from him could seek to cut off his train, and grudge him the respect due to his old age. But she, persisting in her undutiful demand, the old man's rage was so excited, that he called her a detested kite, and said that she spoke an untruth; and so indeed she did, for the hundred knights were all men of choice behaviour and sobriety of manners, skilled in all particulars of duty, and not given to rioting or feasting, as she said. And he bid his horses to be prepared, for he would go to his other daughter, Regan, he and his hundred knights; and he spoke of ingratitude, and said it was a marble-hearted devil, and showed more hideous in a child than the sea-monster. And he cursed his eldest daughter Goneril so as was terrible to hear; praying that she might never have a child, or if she had, that it might live to return that scorn and contempt upon her which she had shown to him: that she might feel how sharper than a serpent's tooth it was to have a thankless child. And Goneril's husband, the duke of Albany, beginning to excuse himself for any share which Lear might suppose he had in the unkindness, Lear would not hear him out, but in a rage ordered his horses to be saddled, and set out with his followers for the abode of Regan, his other daughter. And Lear thought to himself how small the fault of Cordelia (if it was a fault) now appeared, in comparison with her sister's, and he wept; and then he was ashamed that such a creature as Goneril should have so much power over his manhood as to make him weep.

Regan and her husband were keeping their court in great pomp and state at their palace; and Lear despatched his servant Caius with letters to his daughter, that she might be prepared for his reception, while he and his train followed after. But it seems that Goneril had been beforehand with him, sending letters also to Regan, accusing her father of waywardness and ill humours, and advising her not to receive so great a train as he was bringing with him. This messenger arrived at the same time with Caius, and

Caius and he met: and who should it be but Caius's old enemy the steward, whom he had formerly tripped up by the heels for his saucy behaviour to Lear. Caius not liking the fellow's look, and suspecting what he came for, began to revile him, and challenged him to fight, which the fellow refusing, Caius, in a fit of honest passion, beat him soundly, as such a mischief-maker and carrier of wicked messages deserved; which coming to the ears of Regan and her husband, they ordered Caius to be put in the stocks, though he was a messenger from the king her father, and in that character demanded the highest respect: so that the first thing the king saw when he entered the castle, was his faithful servant Caius sitting in that disgraceful situation.

This was but a bad omen of the reception which he was to expect; but a worse followed, when, upon inquiry for his daughter and her husband, he was told they were weary with travelling all night, and could not see him; and when lastly, upon his insisting in a positive and angry manner to see them, they came to greet him, whom should he see in their company but the hated Goneril, who had come to tell her own story, and set her sister against the king her father!

This sight much moved the old man, and still more to see Regan take her by the hand; and he asked Goneril if she was not ashamed to look upon his old white beard. And Regan advised him to go home again with Goneril, and live with her peaceably, dismissing half of his attendants, and to ask her forgiveness; for he was old and wanted discretion, and must be ruled and led by persons that had more discretion than himself. And Lear showed how preposterous that would sound, if he were to go down on his knees, and beg of his own daughter for food and raiment, and he argued against such an unnatural dependence, declaring his resolution never to return with her, but to stay where he was with Regan, he and his hundred knights; for he said that she had not forgot the half of the kingdom which he had endowed her with, and that her eyes were not fierce like Goneril's, but mild and kind. And he said that rather than return to Goneril, with half his train cut off, he would go over to France, and beg a wretched pension of the king there, who had married his youngest daughter without a portion.

But he was mistaken in expecting kinder treatment of Regan than he had experienced from her sister Goneril. As if willing to outdo her sister in unfilial behaviour, she declared that she thought fifty knights too many to wait upon him: that five-and-twenty were enough. Then Lear, nigh heart-broken, turned to Goneril and said that he would go back with her, for her fifty doubled five-and-twenty, and so her love was twice as much as Regan's. But Goneril excused herself, and said, what need of so many as five-and-twenty? or even ten? or five? when he might be waited upon by her servants, or her sister's servants? So these two wicked daughters, as if they strove to exceed each other in cruelty to their old father, who had been so good to them, by little and little would have abated him of all his train, all respect (little enough for him that once commanded a kingdom), which was left him to show that he had once been a king! Not that a splendid train is essential to happiness, but from a king to a beggar is a hard change, from commanding millions to be without one attendant; and it was the ingratitude in his daughters' denying it, more than what he would suffer by the want of it, which pierced this poor king to the heart; insomuch, that with this double ill-usage, and vexation for having so foolishly given away a kingdom, his wits began to be unsettled, and while he said he knew not what, he vowed revenge against those unnatural hags, and to make examples of them that should be a terror to the earth!

While he was thus idly threatening what his weak arm could never execute, night came on, and a loud storm of thunder and lightning with rain; and his daughters still persisting in their resolution not to admit his followers, he called for his horses, and chose rather to encounter the utmost fury of the storm abroad, than stay under the same roof with these ungrateful daughters: and they, saying that the injuries which wilful men procure to themselves are their just punishment, suffered him to go in that condition and shut their doors upon him.

The winds were high, and the rain and storm increased, when the old man sallied forth to combat with the elements, less sharp than his daughters' unkindness. For many miles about there was scarce a bush; and there upon a heath, exposed to the fury of the storm in a dark night, did King Lear wander out, and defy the winds and the thunder; and he bid the winds to blow the earth into the sea, or swell the waves of the sea till they drowned the earth, that no token might remain of any such ungrateful animal as man. The old king was now left with no other companion than the poor fool, who still abided with him, with his merry conceits striving to outjest misfortune, saying it was but a naughty night to swim in, and truly the king had better go in and ask his daughters' blessing: —

But he that has a little tiny wit,
  With heigh ho, the wind and the rain!
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
  Though the rain it raineth every day:

and swearing it was a brave night to cool a lady's pride.

Thus poorly accompanied, this once great monarch was found by his ever-faithful servant the good earl of Kent, now transformed to Caius, who ever followed close at his side, though the king did not know him to be the earl; and he said, "Alas! sir, are you here? creatures that love night, love not such nights as these. This dreadful storm has driven the beasts to their hiding places. Man's nature cannot endure the affliction or the fear." And Lear rebuked him and said, these lesser evils were not felt, where a greater malady was fixed. When the mind is at ease, the body has leisure to be delicate, but the tempest in his mind did take all feeling else from his senses, but of that which beat at his heart. And he spoke of filial ingratitude, and said it was all one as if the mouth should tear the hand for lifting food to it; for parents were hands and food and everything to children.

But the good Caius still persisting in his entreaties that the king would not stay out in the open air, at last persuaded him to enter a little wretched hovel which stood upon the heath, where the fool first entering, suddenly ran back terrified, saying that he had seen a spirit. But upon examination this spirit proved to be nothing more than a poor Bedlam beggar, who had crept into this deserted hovel for shelter, and with his talk about devils frighted the fool, one of those poor lunatics who are either mad, or feign to be so, the better to extort charity from the compassionate country people, who go about the country, calling themselves poor Tom and poor Turlygood, saying, "Who gives anything to poor Tom?" sticking pins and nails and sprigs of rosemary into their arms to make them bleed; and with such horrible actions, partly by prayers, and partly with lunatic curses, they move or terrify the ignorant country-folks into giving them alms. This poor fellow was such a one; and the king seeing him in so wretched a plight, with nothing but a blanket about his loins to cover his nakedness, could not be persuaded but that the fellow was some father who had given all away to his daughters, and brought himself to that pass: for nothing he thought could bring a man to such wretchedness but the having unkind daughters.

And from this and many such wild speeches which he uttered, the good Caius plainly perceived that he was not in his perfect mind, but that his daughters' ill usage had really made him go mad. And now the loyalty of this worthy earl of Kent showed itself in more essential services than he had hitherto found opportunity to perform. For with the assistance of some of the king's attendants who remained loyal, he had the person of his royal master removed at daybreak to the castle of Dover, where his own friends and influence, as earl of Kent, chiefly lay; and himself embarking for France, hastened to the court of Cordelia, and did there in such moving terms represent the pitiful condition of her royal father, and set out in such lively colours the inhumanity of her sisters, that this good and loving child with many tears besought the king her husband that he would give her leave to embark for England, with a sufficient power to subdue these cruel daughters and their husbands, and restore the old king her father to his throne; which being granted, she set forth, and with a royal army landed at Dover.

Lear having by some chance escaped from the guardians which the good earl of Kent had put over him to take care of him in his lunacy, was found by some of Cordelia's train, wandering about the fields near Dover, in a pitiable condition, stark mad, and singing aloud to himself, with a crown upon his head which he had made of straw, and nettles, and other wild weeds that he had picked up in the corn-fields. By the advice of the physicians, Cordelia, though earnestly desirous of seeing her father, was prevailed upon to put off the meeting, till by sleep and the operation of herbs which they gave him, he should be restored to greater composure. By the aid of these skilful physicians, to whom Cordelia promised all her gold and jewels for the recovery of the old king, Lear was soon in a condition to see his daughter.

A tender sight it was to see the meeting between this father and daughter; to see the struggles between the joy of this poor old king at beholding again his once darling child, and the shame at receiving such filial kindness from her whom he had cast off for so small a fault in his displeasure; both these passions struggling with the remains of his malady, which in his half-crazed brain sometimes made him that he scarce remembered where he was, or who it was that so kindly kissed him and spoke to him: and then he would beg the standers-by not to laugh at him, if he were mistaken in thinking this lady to be his daughter Cordelia! And then to see him fall on his knees to beg pardon of his child; and she, good lady, kneeling all the while to ask a blessing of him, and telling him that it did not become him to kneel, but it was her duty, for she was his child, his true and very child Cordelia! and she kissed him (as she said) to kiss away all her sisters' unkindness, and said that they might be ashamed of themselves, to turn their old kind father with his white beard out into the cold air, when her enemy's dog, though it had bit her (as she prettily expressed it), should have stayed by her fire such a night as that, and warmed himself. And she told her father how she had come from France with purpose to bring him assistance; and he said that she must forget and forgive, for he was old and foolish, and did not know what he did; but that to be sure she had great cause not to love him, but her sisters had none. And Cordelia said that she had no cause, no more than they had.

So we will leave this old king in the protection of his dutiful and loving child, where, by the help of sleep and medicine, she and her physicians at length succeeded in winding up the untuned and jarring senses which the cruelty of his other daughters had so violently shaken. Let us return to say a word or two about those cruel daughters.

These monsters of ingratitude, who had been so false to their old father, could not be expected to prove more faithful to their own husbands. They soon grew tired of paying even the appearance of duty and affection, and in an open way showed they had fixed their loves upon another. It happened that the object of their guilty loves was the same. It was Edmund, a natural son of the late earl of Gloucester, who by his treacheries had succeeded in disinheriting his brother Edgar, the lawful heir, from his earldom, and by his wicked practices was now earl himself; a wicked man, and a fit object for the love of such wicked creatures as Goneril and Regan. It falling out about this time that the duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband, died, Regan immediately declared her intention of wedding this earl of Gloucester, which rousing the jealousy of her sister, to whom as well as to Regan this wicked earl had at sundry times professed love, Goneril found means to make away with her sister by poison; but being detected in her practices, and imprisoned by her husband, the duke of Albany, for this deed, and for her guilty passion for the earl which had come to his ears, she, in a fit of disappointed love and rage, shortly put an end to her own life. Thus the justice of Heaven at last overtook these wicked daughters.

While the eyes of all men were upon this event, admiring the justice displayed in their deserved deaths, the same eyes were suddenly taken off from this sight to admire at the mysterious ways of the same power in the melancholy fate of the young and virtuous daughter, the lady Cordelia, whose good deeds did seem to deserve a more fortunate conclusion: but it is an awful truth, that innocence and piety are not always successful in this world. The forces which Goneril and Regan had sent out under the command of the bad earl of Gloucester were victorious, and Cordelia, by the practices of this wicked earl, who did not like that any should stand between him and the throne, ended her life in prison. Thus, Heaven took this innocent lady to itself in her young years, after showing her to the world an illustrious example of filial duty. Lear did not long survive this kind child.

Before he died, the good earl of Kent, who had still attended his old master's steps from the first of his daughters' ill usage to this sad period of his decay, tried to make him understand that it was he who had followed him under the name of Caius; but Lear's care-crazed brain at that time could not comprehend how that could be, or how Kent and Caius could be the same person: so Kent thought it needless to trouble him with explanations at such a time; and Lear soon after expiring, this faithful servant to the king, between age and grief for his old master's vexations, soon followed him to the grave.

How the judgment of Heaven overtook the bad earl of Gloucester, whose treasons were discovered, and himself slain in single combat with his brother, the lawful earl; and how Goneril's husband, the duke of Albany, who was innocent of the death of Cordelia, and had never encouraged his lady in her wicked proceedings against her father, ascended the throne of Britain after the death of Lear, is needless here to narrate: Lear and his Three Daughters being dead, whose adventures alone concern our story.

MACBETH

WHEN Duncan the Meek reigned king of Scotland, there lived a great thane, or lord, called Macbeth. This Macbeth was a near kinsman to the king, and in great esteem at court for his valour and conduct in the wars; an example of which he had lately given, in defeating a rebel army assisted by the troops of Norway in terrible numbers.

The two Scottish generals, Macbeth and Banquo, returning victorious from this great battle, their way lay over a blasted heath, where they were stopped by the strange appearance of three figures like women, except that they had beards, and their withered skins and wild attire made them look not like any earthly creatures. Macbeth first addressed them, when they, seemingly offended, laid each one her choppy finger upon her skinny lips, in token of silence; and the first of them saluted Macbeth with the title of thane of Glamis. The general was not a little startled to find himself known by such creatures; but how much more, when the second of them followed up that salute by giving him the title of thane of Cawdor, to which honour he had no pretensions; and again the third bid him "All hail! king that shalt be hereafter!" Such a prophetic greeting might well amaze him, who knew that while the king's sons lived he could not hope to succeed to the throne. Then turning to Banquo, they pronounced him, in a sort of riddling terms, to be *lesser than Macbeth and greater! not so happy, but much happier!* and prophesied that though he should never reign, yet his sons after him should be kings in Scotland. They then turned into air, and vanished: by which the generals knew them to be the weird sisters, or witches.

While they stood pondering on the strangeness of this adventure, there arrived certain messengers from the king, who were empowered by him to confer upon Macbeth the dignity of thane of Cawdor: an event so miraculously corresponding with the prediction of the witches astonished Macbeth, and he stood wrapped in amazement, unable to make reply to the messengers; and in that point of time swelling hopes arose in his mind that the prediction of the third witch might in like manner have its accomplishment, and that he should one day reign king in Scotland.

Turning to Banquo, he said, "Do you not hope that your children shall be kings, when what the witches promised to me has so wonderfully come to pass?" "That hope," answered the general, "might enkindle you to aim at the throne; but oftentimes these ministers of darkness tell us truths in little things, to betray us into deeds of greatest consequence."

But the wicked suggestions of the witches had sunk too deep into the mind of Macbeth to allow him to attend to the warnings of the good Banquo. From that time he bent all his thoughts how to compass the throne of Scotland.

Macbeth had a wife, to whom he communicated the strange prediction of the weird sisters, and its partial accomplishment. She was a bad, ambitious woman, and so as her husband and herself could arrive at greatness, she cared not much by what means. She spurred on the reluctant purpose of Macbeth, who felt compunction at the thoughts of blood, and did not cease to represent the murder of the king as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy.

It happened at this time that the king, who out of his royal condescension would oftentimes visit his principal nobility upon gracious terms, came to Macbeth's house, attended by his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and a numerous train of thanes and attendants, the more to honour Macbeth for the triumphal success of his wars.

The castle of Macbeth was pleasantly situated, and the air about it was sweet and wholesome, which appeared by the nests which the martlet, or swallow, had built under all the jutting friezes and buttresses of the building, wherever it found a place of advantage;

for where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is observed to be delicate. The king entered well-pleased with the place, and not less so with the attentions and respect of his honoured hostess, lady Macbeth, who had the art of covering treacherous purposes with smiles; and could look like the innocent flower, while she was indeed the serpent under it.

The king being tired with his journey, went early to bed, and in his state-room two grooms of his chamber (as was the custom) slept beside him. He had been unusually pleased with his reception, and had made presents before he retired to his principal officers; and among the rest, had sent a rich diamond to lady Macbeth, greeting her by the name of his most kind hostess.

Now was the middle of night, when over half the world nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse men's minds asleep, and none but the wolf and the murderer is abroad. This was the time when lady Macbeth waked to plot the murder of the king. She would not have undertaken a deed so abhorrent to her sex, but that she feared her husband's nature, that it was too full of the milk of human kindness, to do a contrived murder. She knew him to be ambitious, but withal to be scrupulous, and not yet prepared for that height of crime which commonly in the end accompanies inordinate ambition. She had won him to consent to the murder, but she doubted his resolution; and she feared that the natural tenderness of his disposition (more humane than her own) would come between, and defeat the purpose. So with her own hands armed with a dagger, she approached the king's bed; having taken care to ply the grooms of his chamber so with wine, that they slept intoxicated, and careless of their charge. There lay Duncan in a sound sleep after the fatigues of his journey, and as she viewed him earnestly, there was something in his face, as he slept, which resembled her own father; and she had not the courage to proceed.

She returned to confer with her husband. His resolution had begun to stagger. He considered that there were strong reasons against the deed. In the first place, he was not only a subject, but a near kinsman to the king; and he had been his host and entertainer that day, whose duty, by the laws of hospitality, it was to shut the door against his murderers, not bear the knife himself. Then he considered how just and merciful a king this Duncan had been, how clear of offence to his subjects, how loving to his nobility, and in particular to him; that such kings are the peculiar care of Heaven, and their subjects doubly bound to revenge their deaths. Besides, by the favours of the king, Macbeth stood high in the opinion of all sorts of men, and how would those honours be stained by the reputation of so foul a murder!

In these conflicts of the mind lady Macbeth found her husband inclining to the better part, and resolving to proceed no further. But she being a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose, began to pour in at his ears words which infused a portion of her own spirit into his mind, assigning reason upon reason why he should not shrink from what he had undertaken; how easy the deed was; how soon it would be over; and how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come sovereign sway and royalty! Then she threw contempt on his change of purpose, and accused him of fickleness and cowardice; and declared that she had given suck, and knew how tender it was to love the babe that milked her; but she would, while it was smiling in her face, have plucked it from her breast, and dashed its brains out, if she had so sworn to do it, as he had sworn to perform that murder. Then she added, how practicable it was to lay the guilt of the deed upon the drunken sleepy grooms. And with the valour of her tongue she so chastised his sluggish resolutions, that he once more summoned up courage to the bloody business.

So, taking the dagger in his hand, he softly stole in the dark to the room where Duncan lay; and as he went, he thought he saw another dagger in the air, with the handle towards him, and on the blade and at the point of it drops of blood; but when he tried to grasp at it, it was nothing but air, a mere phantasm proceeding from his own hot and oppressed brain and the business he had in hand.

Getting rid of this fear, he entered the king's room, whom he despatched with one stroke of his dagger. Just as he had done the murder, one of the grooms, who slept in the chamber, laughed in his sleep, and the other cried, "Murder," which woke them both; but they said a short prayer; one of them said, "God bless us!" and the other answered "Amen;" and addressed themselves to sleep again. Macbeth, who stood listening to them, tried to say, "Amen," when the fellow said, "God bless us!" but, though he had most need of a blessing, the word stuck in his throat, and he could not pronounce it.

Again he thought he heard a voice which cried, "Sleep no more: Macbeth doth murder sleep, the innocent sleep, that nourishes life." Still it cried, "Sleep no more," to all the house. "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

With such horrible imaginations Macbeth returned to his listening wife, who began to think he had failed of his purpose, and that the deed was somehow frustrated. He came in so distracted a state, that she reproached him with his want of firmness, and sent him to wash his hands of the blood which stained them, while she took his dagger, with purpose to stain the cheeks of the grooms with blood, to make it seem their guilt.

Morning came, and with it the discovery of the murder, which could not be concealed; and though Macbeth and his lady made great show of grief, and the proofs against the grooms (the dagger being produced against them and their faces smeared with blood) were sufficiently strong, yet the entire suspicion fell upon Macbeth, whose inducements to such a deed were so much more forcible than such poor silly grooms could be supposed to have; and Duncan's two sons fled. Malcolm, the eldest, sought for refuge in the English court; and the youngest, Donalbain, made his escape to Ireland.

The king's sons, who should have succeeded him, having thus vacated the throne, Macbeth as next heir was crowned king, and thus the prediction of the weird sisters was literally accomplished.

Though placed so high, Macbeth and his queen could not forget the prophecy of the weird sisters, that, though Macbeth should be king, yet not his children, but the children of Banquo, should be kings after him. The thought of this, and that they had defiled their hands with blood, and done so great crimes, only to place the posterity of Banquo upon the throne, so rankled within them, that they determined to put to death both Banquo and his son, to make void the predictions of the weird sisters, which in their own case had been so remarkably brought to pass.

For this purpose they made a great supper, to which they invited all the chief thanes; and, among the rest, with marks of particular respect, Banquo and his son Fleance were invited. The way by which Banquo was to pass to the palace at night was beset by murderers appointed by Macbeth, who stabbed Banquo; but in the scuffle Fleance escaped. From that Fleance descended a race of monarchs who afterwards filled the Scottish throne, ending with James the Sixth of Scotland and the First of England, under whom the two crowns of England and Scotland were united.

At supper, the queen, whose manners were in the highest degree affable and royal, played the hostess with a gracefulness and attention which conciliated every one present, and Macbeth discoursed freely with his thanes and nobles, saying, that all that was honourable in the country was under his roof, if he had but his good friend Banquo present, whom yet he hoped he should rather have to chide for neglect, than to lament for any mischance. Just at these words the ghost of Banquo, whom he had caused to be murdered, entered the room and placed himself on the chair which Macbeth was about to occupy. Though Macbeth was a bold man, and one that could have faced the devil without trembling, at this horrible sight his cheeks turned white with fear, and he stood quite unmanned with his eyes fixed upon the ghost. His queen and all the nobles, who saw nothing, but perceived him gazing (as they thought) upon an empty chair, took it for a fit of distraction; and she reproached him, whispering that it was but the same fancy which made him see the dagger in the air, when he was about to kill Duncan. But Macbeth continued to see the ghost, and gave no heed to all they could say, while he addressed it with distracted words, yet so significant, that his queen, fearing the dreadful secret would be disclosed, in great haste dismissed the guests, excusing the infirmity of Macbeth as a disorder he was often troubled with.

To such dreadful fancies Macbeth was subject. His queen and he had their sleeps afflicted with terrible dreams, and the blood of Banquo troubled them not more than the escape of Fleance, whom now they looked upon as father to a line of kings who should keep their posterity out of the throne. With these miserable thoughts they found no peace, and Macbeth determined once more to seek out the weird sisters, and know from them the worst.

He sought them in a cave upon the heath, where they, who knew by foresight of his coming, were engaged in preparing their dreadful charms, by which they conjured up infernal spirits to reveal to them futurity. Their horrid ingredients were toads, bats, and serpents, the eye of a newt, and the tongue of a dog, the leg of a lizard, and the wing of the night-owl, the scale of a dragon, the tooth of a wolf, the maw of the ravenous salt-sea shark, the mummy of a witch, the root of the poisonous hemlock (this to have effect must be digged in the dark), the gall of a goat, and the liver of a Jew, with slips of the yew tree that roots itself in graves, and the finger of a dead child: all these were set on to boil in a great kettle, or cauldron, which, as fast as it grew too hot, was cooled with a baboon's blood: to these they poured in the blood of a sow that had eaten her young, and they threw into the flame the grease that had sweaten from a murderer's gibbet. By these charms they bound the infernal spirits to answer their questions.

It was demanded of Macbeth, whether he would have his doubts resolved by them, or by their masters, the spirits. He, nothing daunted by the dreadful ceremonies which he saw, boldly answered, "Where are they? let me see them." And they called the spirits, which were three. And the first arose in the likeness of an armed head, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him beware of the thane of Fife; for which caution Macbeth thanked him; for Macbeth had entertained a jealousy of Macduff, the thane of Fife.

And the second spirit arose in the likeness of a bloody child, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him have no fear, but laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born should have power to hurt him; and he advised him to be bloody, bold, and resolute. "Then live, Macduff!" cried the king; "what need I fear of thee? but yet I will make assurance doubly sure. Thou shalt not live; that I may tell pale-hearted Fear it lies, and sleep in spite of thunder."

That spirit being dismissed, a third arose in the form of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. He called Macbeth by name, and comforted him against conspiracies, saying, that he should never be vanquished, until the wood of Birnam to Dunsinane Hill should come against him. "Sweet bodements! good!" cried Macbeth; "who can unfix the forest, and move it from its earth-bound roots? I see I shall live the usual period of man's life, and not be cut off by a violent death. But my heart throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art can tell so much, if Banquo's issue shall ever reign in this kingdom?" Here the cauldron sank into the ground, and a noise of music was heard, and eight shadows, like kings, passed by Macbeth, and Banquo last, who bore a glass which showed the figures of many more, and Banquo all bloody smiled upon Macbeth, and pointed to them; by which Macbeth knew that these were the posterity of Banquo, who should reign after him in Scotland; and the witches, with a sound of soft music, and with dancing, making a show of duty and welcome to Macbeth, vanished. And from this time the thoughts of Macbeth were all bloody and dreadful.

The first thing he heard when he got out of the witches' cave, was that Macduff, thane of Fife, had fled to England, to join the

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army which was forming against him under Malcolm, the eldest son of the late king, with intent to displace Macbeth, and set Malcolm, the right heir, upon the throne. Macbeth, stung with rage, set upon the castle of Macduff, and put his wife and children, whom the thane had left behind, to the sword, and extended the slaughter to all who claimed the least relationship to Macduff.

These and such-like deeds alienated the minds of all his chief nobility from him. Such as could, fled to join with Malcolm and Macduff, who were now approaching with a powerful army, which they had raised in England; and the rest secretly wished success to their arms, though for fear of Macbeth they could take no active part. His recruits went on slowly. Everybody hated the tyrant; nobody loved or honoured him; but all suspected him, and he began to envy the condition of Duncan, whom he had murdered, who slept soundly in his grave, against whom treason had done its worst: steel nor poison, domestic malice nor foreign levies, could hurt him any longer.

While these things were acting, the queen, who had been the sole partner in his wickedness, in whose bosom he could sometimes seek a momentary repose from those terrible dreams which afflicted them both nightly, died, it is supposed, by her own hands, unable to bear the remorse of guilt, and public hate; by which event he was left alone, without a soul to love or care for him, or a friend to whom he could confide his wicked purposes.

He grew careless of life, and wished for death; but the near approach of Malcolm's army roused in him what remained of his ancient courage, and he determined to die (as he expressed it) "with armour on his back." Besides this, the hollow promises of the witches had filled him with a false confidence, and he remembered the sayings of the spirits, that none of woman born was to hurt him, and that he was never to be vanquished till Birnam wood should come to Dunsinane, which he thought could never be. So he shut himself up in his castle, whose impregnable strength was such as defied a siege: here he sullenly waited the approach of

Malcolm. When, upon a day, there came a messenger to him, pale and shaking with fear, almost unable to report that which he had seen; for he averred, that as he stood upon his watch on the hill, he looked towards Birnam, and to his thinking the wood began to move! "Liar and slave!" cried Macbeth; "if thou speakest false, thou shalt hang alive upon the next tree, till famine end thee. If thy tale be true, I care not if thou dost as much by me:" for Macbeth now began to faint in resolution, and to doubt the equivocal speeches of the spirits. He was not to fear till Birnam wood should come to Dunsinane; and now a wood did move! "However," said he, "if this which he avouches be true, let us arm and out. There is no flying hence, nor staying here. I begin to be weary of the sun, and wish my life at an end." With these desperate speeches he sallied forth upon the besiegers, who had now come up to the castle.

The strange appearance which had given the messenger an idea of a wood moving is easily solved. When the besieging army marched through the wood of Birnam, Malcolm, like a skilful general, instructed his soldiers to hew down every one a bough and bear it before him, by way of concealing the true numbers of his host. This marching of the soldiers with boughs had at a distance the appearance which had frightened the messenger. Thus were the words of the spirit brought to pass, in a sense different from that in which Macbeth had understood them, and one great hold of his confidence was gone.

And now a severe skirmishing took place, in which Macbeth, though feebly supported by those who called themselves his friends, but in reality hated the tyrant and inclined to the party of Malcolm and Macduff, yet fought with the extreme of rage and valour, cutting to pieces all who were opposed to him, till he came to where Macduff was fighting. Seeing Macduff, and remembering the caution of the spirit who had counselled him to avoid Macduff, above all men, he would have turned, but Macduff, who had been seeking him through the whole fight, opposed his turning, and a fierce contest ensued; Macduff giving him many foul reproaches for the murder of his wife and children. Macbeth, whose soul was charged enough with blood of that family already, would still have declined the combat; but Macduff still urged him to it, calling him tyrant, murderer, hell-hound, and villain.

Then Macbeth remembered the words of the spirit, how none of woman born should hurt him; and smiling confidently he said to Macduff, "Thou losest thy labour, Macduff. As easily thou mayest impress the air with thy sword, as make me vulnerable. I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of woman born."

"Despair thy charm," said Macduff, "and let that lying spirit whom thou hast served, tell thee, that Macduff was never born of woman, never as the ordinary manner of men is to be born, but was untimely taken from his mother."

"Accursed be the tongue which tells me so," said the trembling Macbeth, who felt his last hold of confidence give way; "and let never man in future believe the lying equivocations of witches and juggling spirits, who deceive us in words which have double senses, and while they keep their promise literally, disappoint our hopes with a different meaning. I will not fight with thee."

"Then live!" said the scornful Macduff; "we will have a show of thee, as men show monsters, and a painted board, on which shall be written, 'Here men may see the tyrant!'"

"Never," said Macbeth, whose courage returned with despair; "I will not live to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet, and to be baited with the curses of the rabble. Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane, and thou opposed to me, who wast never born of woman, yet will I try the last." With these frantic words he threw himself upon Macduff, who, after a severe struggle, in the end overcame him, and cutting off his head, made a present of it to the young and lawful king, Malcolm; who took upon him the government which, by the machinations of the usurper, he had so long been deprived of, and ascended the throne of Duncan the Meek, amid the acclamations of the nobles and the people.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

BERTRAM, count of Rousillon, had newly come to his title and estate, by the death of his father. The king of France loved the father of Bertram, and when he heard of his death, he sent for his son to come immediately to his royal court in Paris, intending, for the friendship he bore the late count, to grace young Bertram with his especial favour and protection.

Bertram was living with his mother, the widowed countess, when Lafeu, an old lord of the French court, came to conduct him to the king. The king of France was an absolute monarch, and the invitation to court was in the form of a royal mandate, or positive command, which no subject, of what high dignity soever, might disobey; therefore though the countess, in parting with this dear son, seemed a second time to bury her husband, whose loss she had so lately mourned, yet she dared not to keep him a single day, but gave instant orders for his departure. Lafeu, who came to fetch him, tried to comfort the countess for the loss of her late lord, and her son's sudden absence; and he said, in a courtier's flattering manner, that the king was so kind a prince, she would find in his majesty a husband, and that he would be a father to her son; meaning only, that the good king would befriend the fortunes of Bertram. Lafeu told the countess that the king had fallen into a sad malady, which was pronounced by his physicians to be incurable. The lady expressed great sorrow on hearing this account of the king's ill health, and said, she wished the father of Helena (a young gentlewoman who was present in attendance upon her) were living, for that she doubted not he could have cured his majesty of his disease. And she told Lafeu something of the history of Helena, saying she was the only daughter of the famous physician Gerard de Narbon, and that he had recommended his daughter to her care when he was dying, so that since his death she had taken Helena under her protection; then the countess praised the virtuous disposition and excellent qualities of Helena, saying she inherited these virtues from her worthy father. While she was speaking Helena wept in sad and mournful silence, which made the countess gently reprove her for too much grieving for her father's death.

Bertram now bade his mother farewell. The countess parted with this dear son with tears and many blessings, and commended him to the care of Lafeu, saying, "Good my lord, advise him, for he is an unseasoned courtier."

Bertram's last words were spoken to Helena, but they were words of mere civility, wishing her happiness; and he concluded his short farewell to her with saying, "Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her."

Helena had long loved Bertram, and when she wept in sad and mournful silence, the tears she shed were not for Gerard de Narbon. Helena loved her father, but in the present feeling of a deeper love, the object of which she was about to lose, she had forgotten the very form and features of her dead father, her imagination presenting no image to her mind but Bertram's.

Helena had long loved Bertram, yet she always remembered that he was the count of Rousillon, descended from the most ancient family in France. She of humble birth. Her parents of no note at all. His ancestors all noble. And therefore she looked up to the high-born Bertram as to her master and to her dear lord, and dared not form any wish but to live his servant, and so living to die his vassal. So great the distance seemed to her between his height of dignity and her lowly fortunes, that she would say, "It were all one that I should love a bright particular star, and think to wed it, Bertram is so far above me."

Bertram's absence filled her eyes with tears and her heart with sorrow; for though she loved without hope, yet it was a pretty comfort to her to see him every hour, and Helena would sit and look upon his dark eye, his arched brow, and the curls of his fine hair, till she seemed to draw his portrait on the tablet of her heart, that heart too capable of retaining the memory of every line in the features of that loved face.

Gerard de Narbon, when he died, left her no other portion than some prescriptions of rare and well-proved virtue, which by deep study and long experience in medicine he had collected as sovereign and almost infallible remedies. Among the rest, there was one set down as an approved medicine for the disease under which Lafeu said the king at that time languished: and when Helena heard of the king's complaint, she, who till now had been so humble and so hopeless, formed an ambitious project in her mind to go herself to Paris, and undertake the cure of the king. But though Helena was the possessor of this choice prescription, it was unlikely, as the king as well as his physicians was of opinion that his disease was incurable, that they would give credit to a poor unlearned virgin, if she should offer to perform a cure. The firm hopes that Helena had of succeeding, if she might be permitted to make the trial, seemed more than even her father's skill warranted, though he was the most famous physician of his time; for she felt a strong faith that this good medicine was sanctified by all the luckiest stars in heaven to be the legacy that should advance her fortune, even to the high dignity of being count Rousillon's wife.

Bertram had not been long gone, when the countess was informed by her steward, that he had overheard Helena talking to herself, and that he understood from some words she uttered, she was in love with Bertram, and thought of following him to Paris. The countess dismissed the steward with thanks, and desired him to tell Helena she wished to speak with her. What she had just heard of Helena brought the remembrance of days long past into the mind of the countess; those days probably when her love for Bertram's father first began; and she said to herself, "Even so it was with me when I was young. Love is a thorn that belongs to the rose of youth; for in the season of youth, if ever we are nature's children, these faults are ours, though then we think not they are faults." While the countess was thus meditating on the loving errors of her own youth, Helena entered, and she said to her, "Helena, you know I am a mother to you." Helena replied, "You are my honourable mistress." "You are my daughter," said the countess again: "I say I am your mother. Why do you start and look pale at my words?" With looks of alarm and confused thoughts, fearing the countess suspected her love, Helena still replied, "Pardon me, madam, you are not my mother; the count Rousillon cannot be my brother, nor I your daughter." "Yet, Helena," said the countess, "you might be my daughter-in-law; and I am afraid that is what you mean to be, the words *mother* and *daughter* so disturb you. Helena, do you love my son?" "Good madam, pardon me," said the affrighted Helena. Again the countess repeated her question. "Do you love my son?" "Do not you love him, madam?" said Helena. The countess replied, "Give me not this evasive answer, Helena. Come, come, disclose the state of your affections, for your love has to the full appeared." Helena on her knees now owned her love, and with shame and terror implored the pardon of her noble mistress; and with words expressive of the sense she had of the inequality between their fortunes, she protested Bertram did not know she loved him, comparing her humble unaspiring love to a poor Indian, who adores the sun that looks upon his worshipper, but knows of him no more. The countess asked Helena if she had not lately an intent to go to Paris? Helena owned the design she had formed in her mind, when she heard Lafeu speak of the king's illness. "This was your motive for wishing to go to Paris," said the countess, "was it? Speak truly." Helena honestly answered, "My lord your son made me to think of this; else Paris, and the medicine, and the king, had from the conversation of my thoughts been absent then." The countess heard the whole of this confession without saying a word either of approval or of blame, but she strictly questioned Helena as to the probability of the medicine being useful to the king. She found that it was the most prized by Gerard de Narbon of all he possessed, and that he had given it to his daughter on his deathbed; and remembering the solemn promise she had made at that awful hour in regard to this young maid, whose destiny, and the life of the king himself, seemed to depend on the execution of a project (which though conceived by the fond suggestions of a loving maiden's thoughts, the countess knew not but it might be the unseen workings of Providence to bring to pass the recovery of the king, and to lay the foundation of the future fortunes of Gerard de Narbon's daughter), free leave she gave to Helena to pursue her own way, and generously furnished her with ample means and suitable attendants; and Helena set out for Paris with the blessings of the countess, and her kindest wishes for her success.

Helena arrived at Paris, and by the assistance of her friend the old lord Lafeu, she obtained an audience of the king. She had still many difficulties to encounter, for the king was not easily prevailed on to try the medicine offered him by this fair young doctor. But she told him she was Gerard de Narbon's daughter (with whose fame the king was well acquainted), and she offered the precious medicine as the darling treasure which contained the essence of all her father's long experience and skill, and she boldly engaged to forfeit her life, if it failed to restore his majesty to perfect health in the space of two days. The king at length consented to try it, and in two days' time Helena was to lose her life if the king did not recover; but if she succeeded, he promised to give her the choice of any man throughout all France (the princes only excepted) whom she could like for a husband; the choice of a husband being the fee Helena demanded if she cured the king of his disease.

Helena did not deceive herself in the hope she conceived of the efficacy of her father's medicine. Before two days were at an end, the king was restored to perfect health, and he assembled all the young noblemen of his court together, in order to confer the promised reward of a husband upon his fair physician; and he desired Helena to look around on this youthful parcel of noble bachelors, and choose her husband. Helena was not slow to make her choice, for among these young lords she saw the count Rousillon, and turning to Bertram, she said, "This is the man. I dare not say, my lord, I take you, but I give me and my service ever whilst I live into your guiding power." "Why, then," said the king, "young Bertram, take her; she is your wife." Bertram did not hesitate to declare his dislike to this present of the king's of the self-offered Helena, who, he said, was a poor physician's daughter, bred at his father's charge, and now living a dependent on his mother's bounty. Helena heard him speak these words of rejection and of scorn, and she said to the king, "That you are well, my lord, I am glad. Let the rest go." But the king would not suffer his royal command to be so slighted; for the power of bestowing their nobles in marriage was one of the many privileges of the kings of France; and that same day Bertram was married to Helena, a forced and uneasy marriage to Bertram, and of no promising hope to the poor lady, who, though she gained the noble husband she had hazarded her life to obtain, seemed to have won but a splendid blank, her husband's love not being a gift in the power of the king of France to bestow.

Helena was no sooner married, than she was desired by Bertram to apply to the king for him for leave of absence from court; and when she brought him the king's permission for his departure, Bertram told her that he was not prepared for this sudden marriage, it had much unsettled him, and therefore she must not wonder at the course he should pursue. If Helena wondered not, she grieved when she found it was his intention to leave her. He ordered her to go home to his mother. When Helena heard this unkind command, she replied, "Sir, I can nothing say to this, but that I am your most obedient servant, and shall ever with true observance seek to eke out that desert, wherein my homely stars have failed to equal my great fortunes." But this humble speech of Helena's did not at all move the haughty Bertram to pity his gentle wife, and he parted from her without even the common civility of a kind farewell.

Back to the countess then Helena returned. She had accomplished the purport of her journey, she had preserved the life of the king, and she had wedded her heart's dear lord, the count Rousillon; but she returned back a dejected lady to her noble mother-in-law, and as soon as she entered the house she received a letter from Bertram which almost broke her heart.

The good countess received her with a cordial welcome, as if she had been her son's own choice, and a lady of a high degree, and she spoke kind words to comfort her for the unkind neglect of Bertram in sending his wife home on her bridal day alone. But this gracious reception failed to cheer the sad mind of Helena, and she said, "Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone." She then read these words out of Bertram's letter: *When you can get the ring from my finger, which never shall come off, then call me husband, but in such a Then I write a Never.* . . "This is a dreadful sentence!" said Helena. The countess begged her to have patience, and said, now Bertram was gone, she should be her child, and that she deserved a lord that twenty such rude boys as Bertram might tend upon, and hourly call her mistress. But in vain by respectful condescension and kind flattery this matchless mother tried to soothe the sorrows of her daughter-in-law.

Helena still kept her eyes fixed upon the letter and cried out in an agony of grief, *Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.* The countess asked her if she found those words in the letter? "Yes, madam," was all poor Helena could answer.

The next morning Helena was missing. She left a letter to be delivered to the countess after she was gone, to acquaint her with the reason of her sudden absence: in this letter she informed her that she was so much grieved at having driven Bertram from his native country and his home, that to atone for her offence, she had undertaken a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Jaques le Grand, and concluded with requesting the countess to inform her son that the wife he so hated had left his house for ever.

Bertram, when he left Paris, went to Florence, and there became an officer in the duke of Florence's army, and after a successful war, in which he distinguished himself by many brave actions, Bertram received letters from his mother, containing the acceptable tidings that Helena would no more disturb him; and he was preparing to return home, when Helena herself, clad in her pilgrim's weeds, arrived at the city of Florence.

Florence was a city through which the pilgrims used to pass on their way to St. Jaques le Grand; and when Helena arrived at this city, she heard that a hospitable widow dwelt there, who used to receive into her house the female pilgrims that were going to visit the shrine of that saint, giving them lodging and kind entertainment. To this good lady, therefore, Helena went, and the widow gave her a courteous welcome, and invited her to see whatever was curious in that famous city, and told her that if she would like to see the duke's army, she would take her where she might have a full view of it. "And you will see a countryman of yours," said the widow; "his name is Count Rousillon, who has done worthy service in the duke's wars." Helena wanted no second invitation, when she found Bertram was to make part of the show. She accompanied her hostess; and a sad and mournful pleasure it was to her to look once more upon her dear husband's face. "Is he not a handsome man?" said the widow. "I like him well," replied Helena, with great truth. All the way they walked, the talkative widow's discourse was all of Bertram: she told Helena the story of Bertram's marriage, and how he had deserted the poor lady his wife, and entered into the duke's army to avoid living with her. To this account of her own misfortunes Helena patiently listened, and when it was ended, the history of Bertram was not yet done, for then the widow began another tale, every word of which sank deep into the mind of Helena; for the story she now told was of Bertram's love for her daughter.

Though Bertram did not like the marriage forced on him by the king, it seems he was not insensible to love, for since he had been stationed with the army at Florence, he had fallen in love with

Diana, a fair young gentlewoman, the daughter of this widow who was Helena's hostess; and every night, with music of all sorts, and songs composed in praise of Diana's beauty, he would come under her window, and solicit her love; and all his suit to her was, that she would permit him to visit her by stealth after the family were retired to rest; but Diana would by no means be persuaded to grant this improper request, nor give any encouragement to his suit, knowing him to be a married man; for Diana had been brought up under the counsels of a prudent mother, who, though she was now in reduced circumstances, was well born, and descended from the noble family of the Capulets.

All this the good lady related to Helena, highly praising the virtuous principles of her discreet daughter, which she said were entirely owing to the excellent education and good advice she had given her; and she further said, that Bertram had been particularly importunate with Diana to admit him to the visit he so much desired that night, because he was going to leave Florence early the next morning.

Though it grieved Helena to hear of Bertram's love for the widow's daughter, yet from this story the ardent mind of Helena conceived a project (nothing discouraged at the ill success of her former one) to recover her truant lord. She disclosed to the widow that she was Helena, the deserted wife of Bertram, and requested that her kind hostess and her daughter would suffer this visit from Bertram to take place, and allow her to pass herself upon Bertram for Diana; telling them, her chief motive for desiring to have this secret meeting with her husband, was to get a ring from him, which he had said, if ever she was in possession of he would acknowledge her as his wife.

The widow and her daughter promised to assist her in this affair, partly moved by pity for this unhappy forsaken wife, and partly won over to her interest by the promises of reward which Helena made them, giving them a purse of money in earnest of her future favour. In the course of that day Helena caused information to be sent to

Bertram that she was dead; hoping that when he thought himself free to make a second choice by the news of her death, he would offer marriage to her in her feigned character of Diana. And if she could obtain the ring and this promise too, she doubted not she should make some future good come of it.

In the evening, after it was dark, Bertram was admitted into Diana's chamber, and Helena was there ready to receive him. The flattering compliments and love discourse he addressed to Helena were precious sounds to her, though she knew they were meant for Diana; and Bertram was so well pleased with her, that he made her a solemn promise to be her husband, and to love her for ever; which she hoped would be prophetic of a real affection, when he should know it was his own wife, the despised Helena, whose conversation had so delighted him.

Bertram never knew how sensible a lady Helena was, else perhaps he would not have been so regardless of her; and seeing her every day, he had entirely overlooked her beauty; a face we are accustomed to see constantly, losing the effect which is caused by the first sight either of beauty or of plainness; and of her understanding it was impossible he should judge, because she felt such reverence, mixed with her love for him, that she was always silent in his presence: but now that her future fate, and the happy ending of all her love-projects, seemed to depend on her leaving a favourable impression on the mind of Bertram from this night's interview, she exerted all her wit to please him; and the simple graces of her lively conversation and the endearing sweetness of her manners so charmed Bertram, that he vowed she should be his wife. Helena begged the ring from off his finger as a token of his regard, and he gave it to her; and in return for this ring, which it was of such importance to her to possess, she gave him another ring, which was one the king had made her a present of. Before it was light in the morning, she sent Bertram away; and he immediately set out on his journey towards his mother's house.

Helena prevailed on the widow and Diana to accompany her to

Paris, their further assistance being necessary to the full accomplishment of the plan she had formed. When they arrived there, they found the king was gone upon a visit to the countess of Rousillon, and Helena followed the king with all the speed she could make.

The king was still in perfect health, and his gratitude to her who had been the means of his recovery was so lively in his mind, that the moment he saw the countess of Rousillon, he began to talk of Helena, calling her a precious jewel that was lost by the folly of her son; but seeing the subject distressed the countess, who sincerely lamented the death of Helena, he said, "My good lady, I have forgiven and forgotten all." But the good-natured old Lafeu, who was present, and could not bear that the memory of his favourite Helena should be so lightly passed over, said, "This I must say, the young lord did great offence to his majesty, his mother, and his lady; but to himself he did the greatest wrong of all, for he has lost a wife whose beauty astonished all eyes, whose words took all ears captive, whose deep perfection made all hearts wish to serve her." The king said, "Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear. Well — call him hither;" meaning Bertram, who now presented himself before the king: and, on his expressing deep sorrow for the injuries he had done to Helena, the king, for his dead father's and his admirable mother's sake, pardoned him and restored him once more to his favour. But the gracious countenance of the king was soon changed towards him, for he perceived that Bertram wore the very ring upon his finger which he had given to Helena: and he well remembered that Helena had called all the saints in heaven to witness she would never part with that ring, unless she sent it to the king himself upon some great disaster befalling her; and Bertram, on the king's questioning him how he came by the ring, told an improbable story of a lady throwing it to him out of a window, and denied ever having seen Helena since the day of their marriage. The king, knowing Bertram's dislike to his wife, feared he had destroyed her: and he ordered his guards to seize Bertram, saying, "I am wrapt in dismal thinking, for I fear the life of Helena was foully snatched." At this moment Diana and her mother entered, and presented a petition to the king, wherein they begged his majesty to exert his royal power to compel Bertram to marry Diana, he having made her a solemn promise of marriage. Bertram, fearing the king's anger, denied he had made any such promise; and then Diana produced the ring (which Helena had put into her hands) to confirm the truth of her words; and she said that she had given Bertram the ring he then wore, in exchange for that, at the time he vowed to marry her. On hearing this, the king ordered the guards to seize her also; and her account of the ring differing from Bertram's, the king's suspicions were confirmed: and he said, if they did not confess how they came by this ring of Helena's, they should be both put to death. Diana requested her mother might be permitted to fetch the jeweller of whom she bought the ring, which being granted, the widow went out, and presently returned leading in Helena herself.

The good countess, who in silent grief had beheld her son's danger, and had even dreaded that the suspicion of his having destroyed his wife might possibly be true, finding her dear Helena, whom she loved with even a maternal affection, was still living, felt a delight she was hardly able to support; and the king, scarce believing for joy that it was Helena, said, "Is this indeed the wife of Bertram that I see?" Helena, feeling herself yet an unacknowledged wife, replied, "No, my good lord, it is but the shadow of a wife you see, the name and not the thing." Bertram cried out, "Both, both! O pardon!"—"O my lord," said Helena, "when I personated this fair maid, I found you wondrous kind; and look, here is your letter!" reading to him in a joyful tone those words which she had once repeated so sorrowfully, *When from my finger you can get this ring,*—"This is done; it was to me you gave the ring. Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?" Bertram replied, "If you can make it plain that you were the lady I talked with that night, I will love you dearly ever, ever dearly." This was no difficult task, for the widow and Diana came with Helena to prove this fact; and the king was so well pleased with Diana, for the friendly assistance she had rendered the dear lady he so truly valued for the service she had done him, that he promised her also a noble husband: Helena's history giving him a hint, that it was a suitable reward for kings to bestow upon fair ladies when they perform notable services.

Thus Helena at last found that her father's legacy was indeed sanctified by the luckiest stars in heaven; for she was now the beloved wife of her dear Bertram, the daughter-in-law of her noble mistress, and herself the countess of Rousillon.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

KATHARINE, the Shrew, was the eldest daughter of Baptista, a rich gentleman of Padua. She was a lady of such an ungovernable spirit and fiery temper, such a loud-tongued scold, that she was known in Padua by no other name than Katharine the Shrew. It seemed very unlikely, indeed impossible, that any gentleman would ever be found who would venture to marry this lady, and therefore Baptista was much blamed for deferring his consent to many excellent offers that were made to her gentle sister Bianca, putting off all Bianca's suitors with this excuse, that when the eldest sister was fairly off his hands, they should have free leave to address young Bianca.

It happened, however, that a gentleman, named Petruchio, came to Padua, purposely to look out for a wife, who, nothing discouraged by these reports of Katharine's temper, and hearing she was rich and handsome, resolved upon marrying this famous termagant, and taming her into a meek and manageable wife. And truly none was so fit to set about this herculean labour as Petruchio, whose spirit was as high as Katharine's, and he was a witty and most happy-tempered humourist, and withal so wise, and of such a true judgment, that he well knew how to feign a passionate and furious deportment, when his spirits were so calm that himself could have laughed merrily at his own angry feigning, for his natural temper was careless and easy; the boisterous airs he assumed when he became the husband of Katharine being but in sport, or more properly speaking, affected by his excellent discernment, as the only means to overcome, in her own way, the passionate ways of the furious Katharine.

A courting then Petruchio went to Katharine the Shrew; and first of all he applied to Baptista her father, for leave to woo his *gentle* *daughter* Katharine, as Petruchio called her, saying archly, that having heard of her bashful modesty and mild behaviour, he had come from Verona to solicit her love. Her father, though he wished her married, was forced to confess Katharine would ill answer this character, it being soon apparent of what manner of gentleness she was composed, for her music-master rushed into the room to complain that the gentle Katharine, his pupil, had broken his head with her lute, for presuming to find fault with her performance; which, when Petruchio heard, he said, "It is a brave wench; I love her more than ever, and long to have some chat with her;" and hurrying the old gentleman for a positive answer, he said, "My business is in haste, signior Baptista, I cannot come every day to woo. You knew my father: he is dead, and has left me heir to all his lands and goods. Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love, what dowry you will give with her." Baptista thought his manner was somewhat blunt for a lover; but being glad to get Katharine married, he answered that he would give her twenty thousand crowns for her dowry, and half his estate at his death: so this odd match was quickly agreed on, and Baptista went to apprise his shrewish daughter of her lover's addresses, and sent her in to Petruchio to listen to his suit.

In the mean time Petruchio was settling with himself the mode of courtship he would pursue; and he said, "I will woo her with some spirit when she comes. If she rails at me, why then I will tell her she sings as sweetly as a nightingale; and if she frowns, I will say she looks as clear as roses newly washed with dew. If she will not speak a word, I will praise the eloquence of her language; and if she bids me leave her, I will give her thanks as if she bid me stay with her a week." Now the stately Katharine entered, and Petruchio first addressed her with "Good morrow, Kate, for that is your name, I hear." Katharine, not liking this plain salutation, said disdainfully, "They call me Katharine who do speak to me." "You lie," replied the lover; "for you are called plain Kate, and bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the Shrew: but, Kate, you are the prettiest Kate in Christendom, and therefore, Kate, hearing your mildness praised in every town, I am come to woo you for my wife."

A strange courtship they made of it. She in loud and angry terms showing him how justly she had gained the name of Shrew, while he still praised her sweet and courteous words, till at length, hearing her father coming, he said (intending to make as quick a wooing as possible), "Sweet Katharine, let us set this idle chat aside, for your father has consented that you shall be my wife, your dowry is agreed on, and whether you will or no, I will marry you."

And now Baptista entering, Petruchio told him his daughter had received him kindly, and that she had promised to be married the next Sunday. This Katharine denied, saying she would rather see him hanged on Sunday, and reproached her father for wishing to wed her to such a mad-cap ruffian as Petruchio. Petruchio desired her father not to regard her angry words, for they had agreed she should seem reluctant before him, but that when they were alone he had found her very fond and loving; and he said to her, "Give me your hand, Kate; I will go to Venice to buy you fine apparel against our wedding-day. Provide the feast, father, and bid the wedding guests. I will be sure to bring rings, fine array, and rich clothes, that my Katharine may be fine; and kiss me, Kate, for we will be married on Sunday."

On the Sunday all the wedding guests were assembled, but they waited long before Petruchio came, and Katharine wept for vexation to think that Petruchio had only been making jest of her. At last, however, he appeared; but he brought none of the bridal finery he had promised Katharine, nor was he dressed himself like a bridegroom, but in strange disordered attire, as if he meant to make a sport of the serious business he came about; and his servant and the very horses on which they rode were in like manner in mean and fantastic fashion habited.

Petruchio could not be persuaded to change his dress; he said Katharine was to be married to him, and not to his clothes; and finding it was in vain to argue with him, to the church they went, he still behaving in the same mad way, for when the priest asked Petruchio if Katharine should be his wife, he swore so loud that she should, that, all amazed, the priest let fall his book, and as he stooped to take it up, this mad-brained bridegroom gave him such a cuff, that down fell the priest and his book again. And all the while they were being married he stamped and swore so, that the high-spirited Katharine trembled and shook with fear. After the ceremony was over, while they were yet in the church, he called for wine, and drank a loud health to the company, and threw a sop which was at the bottom of the glass full in the sexton's face, giving no other reason for this strange act, than that the sexton's beard grew thin and hungerly, and seemed to ask the sop as he was drinking. Never sure was there such a mad marriage; but Petruchio did but put this wildness on, the better to succeed in the plot he had formed to tame his shrewish wife.

Baptista had provided a sumptuous marriage feast, but when they returned from church, Petruchio, taking hold of Katharine, declared his intention of carrying his wife home instantly: and no remonstrance of his father-in-law, or angry words of the enraged Katharine, could make him change his purpose. He claimed a husband's right to dispose of his wife as he pleased, and away he hurried Katharine off: he seeming so daring and resolute that no one dared attempt to stop him.

Petruchio mounted his wife upon a miserable horse, lean and lank, which he had picked out for the purpose, and himself and his servant no better mounted; they journeyed on through rough and miry ways, and ever when this horse of Katharine's stumbled, he would storm and swear at the poor jaded beast, who could scarce crawl under his burthen, as if he had been the most passionate man alive.

At length, after a weary journey, during which Katharine had heard nothing but the wild ravings of Petruchio at the servant and the horses, they arrived at his house. Petruchio welcomed her kindly to her home, but he resolved she should have neither rest nor food that night. The tables were spread, and supper soon served; but Petruchio, pretending to find fault with every dish, threw the meat about the floor, and ordered the servants to remove it away; and all this he did, as he said, in love for his Katharine, that she might not eat meat that was not well dressed. And when Katharine, weary and supperless, retired to rest, he found the same fault with the bed, throwing the pillows and bed-clothes about the room, so that she was forced to sit down in a chair, where if she chanced to drop asleep, she was presently awakened by the loud voice of her husband, storming at the servants for the ill-making of his wife's bridal-bed.

The next day Petruchio pursued the same course, still speaking kind words to Katharine, but when she attempted to eat, finding fault with everything that was set before her, throwing the breakfast on the floor as he had done the supper; and Katharine, the haughty Katharine, was fain to beg the servants would bring her secretly a morsel of food; but they being instructed by Petruchio, replied, they dared not give her anything unknown to their master. "Ah," said she, "did he marry me to famish me? Beggars that come to my father's door have food given them. But I, who never knew what it was to entreat for anything, am starved for want of food, giddy for want of sleep, with oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed; and that which vexes me more than all, he does it under the name of perfect love, pretending that if I sleep or eat, it were present death to me." Here the soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Petruchio: he, not meaning she should be quite starved, had brought her a small portion of meat, and he said to her, "How fares my sweet Kate? Here, love, you see how diligent I am, I have dressed your meat myself. I am sure this kindness merits thanks. What, not a word? Nay, then you love not the meat, and all the pains I have taken is to no purpose." He then ordered the servant to take the dish away. Extreme hunger, which had abated the pride of Katharine, made her say, though angered to the heart, "I pray you let it stand." But this was not all Petruchio intended to bring her to, and he replied, "The poorest service is repaid with thanks, and so shall mine before you touch the meat." On this Katharine brought out a reluctant "I thank you, sir." And now he suffered her to make a slender meal, saying, "Much good may it do your gentle heart, Kate; eat apace! And now, my honey love, we will return to your father's house, and revel it as bravely as the best, with silken coats and caps and golden rings, with ruffs and scarfs and fans and double change of finery;" and to make her believe he really intended to give her these gay things, he called in a tailor and a haberdasher, who brought some new clothes he had ordered for her, and then giving her plate to the servant to take away, before she had half satisfied her hunger, he said, "What, have you dined?" The haberdasher presented a cap, saying, "Here is the cap your worship bespoke;" on which Petruchio began to storm afresh, saying the cap was moulded in a porringer, and that it was no bigger than a cockle or walnut shell, desiring the haberdasher to take it away and make it bigger. Katharine said, "I will have this; all gentlewomen wear such caps as these."—"When you are gentle," replied Petruchio, "you shall have one too, and not till then." The meat Katharine had eaten had a little revived her fallen spirits, and she said, "Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak, and speak I will: I am no child, no babe; your betters have endured to hear me say my mind; and if you cannot, you had better stop your ears." Petruchio would not hear these angry words, for he had happily discovered a better way of managing his wife than keeping up a jangling argument with her; therefore his answer was, "Why, you say true; it is a paltry cap, and I love you for not liking it."—"Love me, or love me not," said Katharine, "I like the cap, and I will have this cap or none."—"You say you wish to see the gown," said Petruchio, still affecting to misunderstand her. The tailor then came forward and showed her a fine gown he had made for her. Petruchio, whose intent was that she should have neither cap nor gown, found as much fault with that. "O mercy, Heaven!" said he, "what stuff is here! What, do you call this a sleeve? it is like a demi-cannon, carved up and down like an apple tart." The tailor said, "You bid me make it according to the fashion of the times;" and Katharine said, she never saw a better fashioned gown. This was enough for Petruchio, and privately desiring these people might be paid for their goods, and excuses made to them for the seemingly strange treatment he bestowed upon them, he with fierce words and furious gestures drove the tailor and the haberdasher out of the room; and then, turning to Katharine, he said, "Well, come, my Kate, we will go to your father's even in these mean garments we now wear." And then he ordered his horses, affirming they should reach Baptista's house by dinner-time, for that it was but seven o'clock. Now it was not early morning, but the very middle of the day, when he spoke this; therefore Katharine ventured to say, though modestly, being almost overcome by the vehemence of his manner, "I dare assure you, sir, it is two o'clock, and will be supper-time before we get there." But Petruchio meant that she should be so completely subdued, that she should assent to everything he said, before he carried her to her father; and therefore, as if he were lord even of the sun, and could command the hours, he said it should be what time he pleased to have it, before he set forward; "For," he said, "whatever I say or do, you still are crossing it. I will not go to-day, and when I go, it shall be what o'clock I say it is." Another day Katharine was forced to practise her newly-found obedience, and not till he had brought her proud spirit to such a perfect subjection, that she dared not remember there was such a word as contradiction, would Petruchio allow her to go to her father's house; and even while they were upon their journey thither, she was in danger of being turned back again, only because she happened to hint it was the sun, when he affirmed the moon shone brightly at noonday. "Now, by my mother's son," said he, "and that is myself, it shall be the moon, or stars, or what I list, before I journey to your father's house." He then made as if he were going back again; but Katharine, no longer Katharine the Shrew, but the obedient wife, said, "Let us go forward, I pray, now we have come so far, and it shall be the sun, or moon, or what you please, and if you please to call it a rush candle henceforth, I vow it shall be so for me." This he was resolved to prove, therefore he said again, "I say, it is the moon."—"I know it is the moon," replied Katharine. "You lie, it is the blessed sun," said Petruchio. "Then it is the blessed sun," replied Katharine; "but sun it is not, when you say it is not. What you will have it named, even so it is, and so it ever shall be for Katharine." Now then he suffered her to proceed on her journey; but further to try if this yielding humour would last, he addressed an old gentleman they met on the road as if he had been a young woman, saying to him, "Good morrow, gentle mistress;" and asked Katharine if she had ever beheld a fairer gentlewoman, praising the red and white of the old man's cheeks, and comparing his eyes to two bright stars; and again he addressed him, saying, "Fair lovely maid, once more good day to you!" and said to his wife, "Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake." The now completely vanquished Katharine quickly adopted her husband's opinion, and made her speech in like sort to the old gentleman, saying to him, "Young budding virgin, you are fair, and fresh, and sweet: whither are you going, and where is your dwelling? Happy are the parents of so fair a child."—"Why, how now, Kate," said Petruchio; "I hope you are not mad. This is a man, old and wrinkled, faded and withered, and not a maiden, as you say he is." On this Katharine said, "Pardon me, old gentleman; the sun has so dazzled my eyes, that everything I look on seemeth green. Now I perceive you are a reverend father: I hope you will pardon me for my sad mistake."—"Do, good old grandsire," said Petruchio, "and tell us which way you are travelling. We shall be glad of your good company, if you are going our way." The old gentleman replied, "Fair sir, and you, my merry mistress, your strange encounter has much amazed me. My name is Vincentio, and I am going to visit a son of mine who lives at Padua." Then Petruchio knew the old gentleman to be the father of Lucentio, a young gentleman who was to be married to Baptista's younger daughter, Bianca, and he made Vincentio very happy, by telling him the rich marriage his son was about to make: and they all journeyed on pleasantly together till they came to Baptista's house, where there was a large company assembled to celebrate the wedding of Bianca and Lucentio, Baptista having willingly consented to the marriage of Bianca when he had got Katharine off his hands.

When they entered, Baptista welcomed them to the wedding feast, and there was present also another newly married pair.

Lucentio, Bianca's husband, and Hortensio, the other new married man, could not forbear sly jests, which seemed to hint at the shrewish disposition of Petruchio's wife, and these fond bridegrooms seemed highly pleased with the mild tempers of the ladies they had chosen, laughing at Petruchio for his less fortunate choice. Petruchio took little notice of their jokes till the ladies were retired after dinner, and then he perceived Baptista himself joined in the laugh against him: for when Petruchio affirmed that his wife would prove more obedient than theirs, the father of Katharine said, "Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio, I fear you have got the veriest shrew of all." "Well," said Petruchio, "I say no, and therefore for assurance that I speak the truth, let us each one send for his wife, and he whose wife is most obedient to come at first when she is sent for, shall win a wager which we will propose." To this the other two husbands willingly consented, for they were quite confident that their gentle wives would prove more obedient than the headstrong Katharine; and they proposed a wager of twenty crowns, but Petruchio merrily said, he would lay as much as that upon his hawk or hound, but twenty times as much upon his wife. Lucentio and Hortensio raised the wager to a hundred crowns, and Lucentio first sent his servant to desire Bianca would come to him. But the servant returned, and said, "Sir, my mistress sends you word she is busy and cannot come."—"How," said

Petruchio, "does she say she is busy and cannot come? Is that an answer for a wife?" Then they laughed at him, and said, it would be well if Katharine did not send him a worse answer. And now it was Hortensio's turn to send for his wife; and he said to his servant, "Go, and entreat my wife to come to me." "Oh ho! entreat her!" said Petruchio. "Nay, then, she needs must come."—"I am afraid, sir," said Hortensio, "your wife will not be entreated." But presently this civil husband looked a little blank, when the servant returned without his mistress; and he said to him, "How now! Where is my wife?"—"Sir," said the servant, "my mistress says, you have some goodly jest in hand, and therefore she will not come. She bids you come to her."—"Worse and worse!" said Petruchio; and then he sent his servant, saying, "Sirrah, go to your mistress, and tell her I command her to come to me." The company had scarcely time to think she would not obey this summons, when Baptista, all in amaze, exclaimed, "Now, by my *holidame,* here comes Katharine!" and she entered, saying meekly to Petruchio, "What is your will, sir, that you send for me?"—"Where is your sister and Hortensio's wife?" said he. Katharine replied, "They sit conferring by the parlour fire."—"Go, fetch them hither!" said Petruchio. Away went Katharine without reply to perform her husband's command. "Here is a wonder," said Lucentio, "if you talk of a wonder."—"And so it is," said Hortensio; "I marvel what it bodes."—"Marry, peace it bodes," said Petruchio, "and love, and quiet life, and right supremacy; and, to be short, everything that is sweet and happy." Katharine's father, overjoyed to see this reformation in his daughter, said, "Now, fair befall thee, son Petruchio! you have won the wager, and I will add another twenty thousand crowns to her dowry, as if she were another daughter, for she is changed as if she had never been."—"Nay," said Petruchio, "I will win the wager better yet, and show more signs of her new-built virtue and obedience." Katharine now entering with the two ladies, he continued, "See where she comes, and brings your froward wives as prisoners to her womanly persuasion. Katharine, that cap of yours does not become you; off with that bauble, and throw it under foot." Katharine instantly took off her cap, and threw it down. "Lord!" said Hortensio's wife, "may I never have a cause to sigh till I am brought to such a silly pass!" And Bianca, she too said, "Fie, what foolish duty call you this?" On this Bianca's husband said to her, "I wish your duty were as foolish too! The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca, has cost me a hundred crowns since dinner-time."—"The more fool you," said Bianca, "for laying on my duty."—"Katharine," said Petruchio, "I charge you tell these headstrong women what duty they owe their lords and husbands." And to the wonder of all present, the reformed shrewish lady spoke as eloquently in praise of the wifelike duty of obedience, as she had practised it implicitly in a ready submission to Petruchio's will. And Katharine once more became famous in Padua, not as heretofore, as Katharine the Shrew, but as Katharine the most obedient and duteous wife in Padua.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

THE states of Syracuse and Ephesus being at variance, there was a cruel law made at Ephesus, ordaining that if any merchant of Syracuse was seen in the city of Ephesus, he was to be put to death, unless he could pay a thousand marks for the ransom of his life.

Ægeon, an old merchant of Syracuse, was discovered in the streets of Ephesus, and brought before the duke, either to pay this heavy fine, or to receive sentence of death.

Ægeon had no money to pay the fine, and the duke, before he pronounced the sentence of death upon him, desired him to relate the history of his life, and to tell for what cause he had ventured to come to the city of Ephesus, which it was death for any Syracusan merchant to enter.

Ægeon said, that he did not fear to die, for sorrow had made him weary of his life, but that a heavier task could not have been imposed upon him than to relate the events of his unfortunate life. He then began his own history, in the following words:

" I was born at Syracuse, and brought up to the profession of a merchant. I married a lady, with whom I lived very happily, but being obliged to go to Epidamnum, I was detained there by my business six months, and then, finding I should be obliged to stay some time longer, I sent for my wife, who, as soon as she arrived, was brought to bed of two sons, and what was very strange, they were both so exactly alike, that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other. At the same time that my wife was brought to bed of these twin boys, a poor woman in the inn where my wife lodged was brought to bed of two sons, and these twins were as much like each other as my two sons were. The parents of these children being exceeding poor, I bought the two boys, and brought them up to attend upon my sons.

"My sons were very fine children, and my wife was not a little proud of two such boys: and she daily wishing to return home, I unwillingly agreed, and in an evil hour we got on shipboard; for we had not sailed above a league from Epidamnum before a dreadful storm arose, which continued with such violence, that the sailors seeing no chance of saving the ship, crowded into the boat to save their own lives, leaving us alone in the ship, which we every moment expected would be destroyed by the fury of the storm.

"The incessant weeping of my wife, and the piteous complaints of the pretty babes, who, not knowing what to fear, wept for fashion, because they saw their mother weep, filled me with terror for them, though I did not for myself fear death; and all my thoughts were bent to contrive means for their safety. I tied my youngest son to the end of a small spare mast, such as seafaring men provide against storms; at the other end I bound the youngest of the twin slaves, and at the same time I directed my wife how to fasten the other children in like manner to another mast. She thus having the care of the two eldest children, and I of the two younger, we bound ourselves separately to these masts with the children; and but for this contrivance we had all been lost, for the ship split on a mighty rock, and was dashed in pieces; and we, clinging to these slender masts, were supported above the water, where I, having the care of two children, was unable to assist my wife, who with the other children was soon separated from me; but while they were yet in my sight, they were taken up by a boat of fishermen, from Corinth (as I supposed), and seeing them in safety, I had no care but to struggle with the wild sea-waves, to preserve my dear son and the youngest slave. At length we, in our turn, were taken up by a ship, and the sailors, knowing me, gave us kind welcome and assistance, and landed us in safety at Syracuse; but from that sad hour I have never known what became of my wife and eldest child.

"My youngest son, and now my only care, when he was eighteen, years of age, began to be inquisitive after his mother and his brother, and often importuned me that he might take his attendant, the young slave, who had also lost his brother, and go in search of them: at length I unwillingly gave consent, for though I anxiously desired to hear tidings of my wife and eldest son, yet in sending my younger one to find them, I hazarded the loss of him also. It is now seven years since my son left me; five years have I passed in travelling through the world in search of him: I have been in farthest Greece, and through the bounds of Asia, and coasting homewards, I landed here in Ephesus, being unwilling to leave any place unsought that harbours men; but this day must end the story of my life, and happy should I think myself in my death, if I were assured my wife and sons were living."

Here the hapless Ægeon ended the account of his misfortunes; and the duke, pitying this unfortunate father, who had brought upon himself this great peril by his love for his lost son, said, if it were not against the laws, which his oath and dignity did not permit him to alter, he would freely pardon him; yet, instead of dooming him to instant death, as the strict letter of the law required, he would give him that day to try if he could beg or borrow the money to pay the fine.

This day of grace did seem no great favour to Ægeon, for not knowing any man in Ephesus, there seemed to him but little chance that any stranger would lend or give him a thousand marks to pay the fine; and helpless and hopeless of any relief, he retired from the presence of the duke in the custody of a jailor.

Ægeon supposed he knew no person in Ephesus; but at the very time he was in danger of losing his life through the careful search he was making after his youngest son, that son and his eldest son also were both in the city of Ephesus.

Ægeon's sons, besides being exactly alike in face and person, were both named alike, being both called Antipholus, and the two twin slaves were also both named Dromio. Ægeon's youngest son, Antipholus of Syracuse, he whom the old man had come to Ephesus to seek, happened to arrive at Ephesus with his slave Dromio that very same day that Ægeon did; and he being also a merchant of Syracuse, he would have been in the same danger that his father was, but by good fortune he met a friend who told him the peril an old merchant of Syracuse was in, and advised him to pass for a merchant of Epidamnum; this Antipholus agreed to do, and he was sorry to hear one of his own countrymen was in this danger, but he little thought this old merchant was his own father.

The eldest son of Ægeon (who must be called Antipholus of Ephesus, to distinguish him from his brother Antipholus of Syracuse) had lived at Ephesus twenty years, and, being a rich man, was well able to have paid the money for the ransom of his father's life; but Antipholus knew nothing of his father, being so young when he was taken out of the sea with his mother by the fishermen that he only remembered he had been so preserved, but he had no recollection of either his father or his mother; the fishermen who took up this Antipholus and his mother and the young slave Dromio, having carried the two children away from her (to the great grief of that unhappy lady), intending to sell them.

Antipholus and Dromio were sold by them to duke Menaphon, a famous warrior, who was uncle to the duke of Ephesus, and he carried the boys to Ephesus when he went to visit the duke his nephew.

The duke of Ephesus taking a liking to young Antipholus, when he grew up, made him an officer in his army, in which he distinguished himself by his great bravery in the wars, where he saved the life of his patron the duke, who rewarded his merit by marrying him to Adriana, a rich lady of Ephesus; with whom he was living (his slave Dromio still attending him) at the time his father came there.

Antipholus of Syracuse, when he parted with his friend, who advised him to say he came from Epidamnum, gave his slave Dromio some money to carry to the inn where he intended to dine, and in the mean time he said he would walk about and view the city, and observe the manners of the people.

Dromio was a pleasant fellow, and when Antipholus was dull and melancholy he used to divert himself with the odd humours and merry jests of his slave, so that the freedoms of speech he allowed in Dromio were greater than is usual between masters and their servants.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had sent Dromio away, he stood awhile thinking over his solitary wanderings in search of his mother and his brother, of whom in no place where he landed could he hear the least tidings; and he said sorrowfully to himself, "I am like a drop of water in the ocean, which seeking to find its fellow drop, loses itself in the wide sea. So I unhappily, to find a mother and a brother, do lose myself."

While he was thus meditating on his weary travels, which had hitherto been so useless, Dromio (as he thought) returned. Antipholus, wondering that he came back so soon, asked him where he had left the money. Now it was not his own Dromio, but the twin-brother that lived with Antipholus of Ephesus, that he spoke to. The two Dromios and the two Antipholuses were still as much alike as Ægeon had said they were in their infancy; therefore no wonder Antipholus thought it was his own slave returned, and asked him why he came back so soon. Dromio replied, "My mistress sent me to bid you come to dinner. The capon burns, and the pig falls from the spit, and the meat will be all cold if you do not come home." "These jests are out of season," said Antipholus: "where did you leave the money?" Dromio still answering, that his mistress had sent him to fetch Antipholus to dinner: "What mistress?" said Antipholus. "Why, your worship's wife, sir," replied Dromio. Antipholus having no wife, he was very angry with Dromio, and said, "Because I familiarly sometimes chat with you, you presume to jest with me in this free manner. I am not in a sportive humour now: where is the money? we being strangers here, how dare you trust so great a charge from your own custody?" Dromio hearing his master, as he thought him, talk of their being strangers, supposing Antipholus was jesting, replied merrily, "I pray you, sir, jest as you sit at dinner. I had no charge but to fetch you home, to dine with my mistress and her sister." Now Antipholus lost all patience, and beat Dromio, who ran home, and told his mistress that his master had refused to come to dinner, and said that he had no wife.

Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, was very angry when she heard that her husband said he had no wife; for she was of a jealous temper, and she said her husband meant that he loved another lady better than herself; and she began to fret, and say unkind words of jealousy and reproach of her husband; and her sister Luciana, who lived with her, tried in vain to persuade her out of her groundless suspicions.

Antipholus of Syracuse went to the inn, and found Dromio with the money in safety there, and seeing his own Dromio, he was going again to chide him for his free jests, when Adriana came up to him, and not doubting but it was her husband she saw, she began to reproach him for looking strange upon her (as well he might, never having seen this angry lady before); and then she told him how well he loved her before they were married, and that now he loved some other lady instead of her. "How comes it now, my husband," said she, "O how comes it that I have lost your love?"—"Plead you to me, fair dame?" said the astonished Antipholus. It was in vain he told her he was not her husband, and that he had been in Ephesus but two hours; she insisted on his going home with her, and Antipholus at last, being unable to get away, went with her to his brother's house, and dined with Adriana and her sister, the one calling him husband, and the other brother, he, all amazed, thinking he must have been married to her in his sleep, or that he was sleeping now. And Dromio, who followed them, was no less surprised, for the cook-maid, who was his brother's wife, also claimed him for her husband.

While Antipholus of Syracuse was dining with his brother's wife, his brother, the real husband, returned home to dinner with his slave Dromio; but the servants would not open the door, because their mistress had ordered them not to admit any company; and when they repeatedly knocked, and said they were Antipholus and Dromio, the maids laughed at them, and said that Antipholus was at dinner with their mistress, and Dromio was in the kitchen; and though they almost knocked the door down, they could not gain admittance, and at last Antipholus went away very angry, and strangely surprised at hearing a gentleman was dining with his wife.

When Antipholus of Syracuse had finished his dinner, he was so perplexed at the lady's still persisting in calling him husband, and at hearing that Dromio had also been claimed by the cook-maid, that he left the house, as soon as he could find any pretence to get away; for though he was very much pleased with Luciana, the sister, yet the jealous-tempered Adriana he disliked very much, nor was Dromio at all better satisfied with his fair wife in the kitchen: therefore both master and man were glad to get away from their new wives as fast as they could.

The moment Antipholus of Syracuse had left the house, he was met by a goldsmith, who mistaking him, as Adriana had done, for Antipholus of Ephesus, gave him a gold chain, calling him by his name; and when Antipholus would have refused the chain, saying it did not belong to him, the goldsmith replied he made it by his own orders; and went away, leaving the chain in the hands of Antipholus, who ordered his man Dromio to get his things on board a ship, not choosing to stay in a place any longer, where he met with such strange adventures that he surely thought himself bewitched.

The goldsmith who had given the chain to the wrong Antipholus, was arrested immediately after for a sum of money he owed; and Antipholus, the married brother, to whom the goldsmith thought he had given the chain, happened to come to the place where the officer was arresting the goldsmith, who, when he saw Antipholus, asked him to pay for the gold chain he had just delivered to him, the price amounting to nearly the same sum as that for which he had been arrested. Antipholus denying the having received the chain, and the goldsmith persisting to declare that he had but a few minutes before given it to him, they disputed this matter a long time, both thinking they were right: for Antipholus knew the goldsmith never gave him the chain, and so like were the two brothers, the goldsmith was as certain he had delivered the chain into his hands, till at last the officer took the goldsmith away to prison for the debt he owned, and at the same time the goldsmith made the officer arrest Antipholus for the price of the chain; so that at the conclusion of their dispute, Antipholus and the merchant were both taken away to prison together.

As Antipholus was going to prison, he met Dromio of Syracuse, his brother's slave, and mistaking him for his own, he ordered him to go to Adriana his wife, and tell her to send the money for which he was arrested. Dromio wondering that his master should send him back to the strange house where he dined, and from which he had just before been in such haste to depart, did not dare to reply, though he came to tell his master the ship was ready to sail: for he saw Antipholus was in no humour to be jested with. Therefore he went away, grumbling within himself, that he must return to Adriana's house, "Where," said he, "Dowsabel claims me for a husband: but I must go, for servants must obey their masters' commands."

Adriana gave him the money, and as Dromio was returning, he met Antipholus of Syracuse, who was still in amaze at the surprising adventures he met with; for his brother being well known in Ephesus, there was hardly a man he met in the streets but saluted him as an old acquaintance: some offered him money which they said was owing to him, some invited him to come and see them, and some gave him thanks for kindnesses they said he had done them, all mistaking him for his brother. A tailor showed him some silks he had bought for him, and insisted upon taking measure of him for some clothes.

Antipholus began to think he was among a nation of sorcerers and witches, and Dromio did not at all relieve his master from his bewildered thoughts, by asking him how he got free from the officer who was carrying him to prison, and giving him the purse of gold which Adriana had sent to pay the debt with. This talk of Dromio's of the arrest and of a prison, and of the money he had brought from Adriana, perfectly confounded Antipholus, and he said, "This fellow Dromio is certainly distracted, and we wander here in illusions;" and quite terrified at his own confused thoughts, he cried out, "Some blessed power deliver us from this strange place!"

And now another stranger came up to him, and she was a lady, and she too called him Antipholus, and told him he had dined with her that day, and asked him for a gold chain which she said he had promised to give her. Antipholus now lost all patience, and calling her a sorceress, he denied that he had ever promised her a chain, or dined with her, or had even seen her face before that moment. The lady persisted in affirming he had dined with her, and had promised her a chain, which Antipholus still denying, she further said, that she had given him a valuable ring, and if he would not give her the gold chain, she insisted upon having her own ring again. On this Antipholus became quite frantic, and again calling her sorceress and witch, and denying all knowledge of her or her ring, ran away from her, leaving her astonished at his words and his wild looks, for nothing to her appeared more certain than that he had dined with her, and that she had given him a ring, in consequence of his promising to make her a present of a gold chain. But this lady had fallen into the same mistake the others had done, for she had taken him for his brother: the married Antipholus had done all the things she taxed this Antipholus with.

When the married Antipholus was denied entrance into his own house (those within supposing him to be already there), he had gone away very angry, believing it to be one of his wife's jealous freaks, to which she was very subject, and remembering that she had often falsely accused him of visiting other ladies, he, to be revenged on her for shutting him out of his own house, determined to go and dine with this lady, and she receiving him with great civility, and his wife having so highly offended him, Antipholus promised to give her a gold chain, which he had intended as a present for his wife; it was the same chain which the goldsmith by mistake had given to his brother. The lady liked so well the thoughts of having a fine gold chain, that she gave the married Antipholus a ring; which when, as she supposed (taking his brother for him), he denied, and said he did not know her, and left her in such a wild passion, she began to think he was certainly out of his senses; and presently she resolved to go and tell Adriana that her husband was mad. And while she was telling it to Adriana, he came, attended by the jailor (who allowed him to come home to get the money to pay the debt), for the purse of money, which Adriana had sent by Dromio, and he had delivered to the other Antipholus.

Adriana believed the story the lady told her of her husband's madness must be true, when he reproached her for shutting him out of his own house; and remembering how he had protested all dinner-time that he was not her husband, and had never been in Ephesus till that day, she had no doubt that he was mad; she therefore paid the jailor the money, and having discharged him, she ordered her servants to bind her husband with ropes, and had him conveyed into a dark room, and sent for a doctor to come and cure him of his madness: Antipholus all the while hotly exclaiming against this false accusation, which the exact likeness he bore to his brother had brought upon him. But his rage only the more confirmed them in the belief that he was mad; and Dromio persisting in the same story, they bound him also, and took him away along with his master.

Soon after Adriana had put her husband into confinement, a servant came to tell her that Antipholus and Dromio must have broken loose from their keepers, for that they were both walking at liberty in the next street. On hearing this, Adriana ran out to fetch him home, taking some people with her to secure her husband again;

and her sister went along with her. When they came to the gates of a convent in their neighbourhood, there they saw Antipholus and Dromio, as they thought, being again deceived by the likeness of the twin-brothers.

Antipholus of Syracuse was still beset with the perplexities this likeness had brought upon him. The chain which the goldsmith had given him was about his neck, and the goldsmith was reproaching him for denying that he had it, and refusing to pay for it, and Antipholus was protesting that the goldsmith freely gave him the chain in the morning, and that from that hour he had never seen the goldsmith again.

And now Adriana came up to him and claimed him as her lunatic husband, who had escaped from his keepers; and the men she brought with her were going to lay violent hands on Antipholus and Dromio; but they ran into the convent, and Antipholus begged the abbess to give him shelter in her house.

And now came out the lady abbess herself to inquire into the cause of this disturbance. She was a grave and venerable lady, and wise to judge of what she saw, and she would not too hastily give up the man who had sought protection in her house; so she strictly questioned the wife about the story she told of her husband's madness, and she said, " What is the cause of this sudden distemper of your husband's? Has he lost his wealth at sea? Or is it the death of some dear friend that has disturbed his mind?" Adriana replied, that no such things as these had been the cause. " Perhaps," said the abbess, " he has fixed his affections on some other lady than you his wife; and that has driven him to this state." Adriana said she had long thought the love of some other lady was the cause of his frequent absences from home. Now it was not his love for another, but the teasing jealousy of his wife's temper, that often obliged Antipholus to leave his home; and (the abbess suspecting this from the vehemence of Adriana's manner) to learn the truth, she said, " You should have reprehended him for this."—" Why, so I did," replied Adriana. " Ay," said the abbess, " but perhaps not enough." Adriana, willing to convince the abbess that she had said enough to Antipholus on this subject, replied, "It was the constant subject of our conversation: in bed I would not let him sleep for speaking of it. At table I would not let him eat for speaking of it. When I was alone with him, I talked of nothing else; and in company I gave him frequent hints of it. Still all my talk was how vile and bad it was in him to love any lady better than me."

The lady abbess, having drawn this full confession from the jealous Adriana, now said, "And therefore comes it that your husband is mad. The venomous clamour of a jealous woman is a more deadly poison than a mad dog's tooth. It seems his sleep was hindered by your railing; no wonder that his head is light: and his meat was sauced with your upbraidings; unquiet meals make ill digestions, and that has thrown him into this fever. You say his sports were disturbed by your brawls; being debarred from the enjoyment of society and recreation, what could ensue but dull melancholy and comfortless despair? The consequence is then, that your jealous fits have made your husband mad."

Luciana would have excused her sister, saying, she always reprehended her husband mildly; and she said to her sister, "Why do you hear these rebukes without answering them?" But the abbess had made her so plainly perceive her fault, that she could only answer, "She has betrayed me to my own reproof."

Adriana, though ashamed of her own conduct, still insisted on having her husband delivered up to her; but the abbess would suffer no person to enter her house, nor would she deliver up this unhappy man to the care of the jealous wife, determining herself to use gentle means for his recovery, and she retired into her house again, and ordered her gates to be shut against them.

During the course of this eventful day, in which so many errors had happened from the likeness the twin brothers bore to each other, old Ægeon's day of grace was passing away, it being now near sunset; and at sunset he was doomed to die, if he could not pay the money.

The place of his execution was near this convent, and here he arrived just as the abbess retired into the convent; the duke attending in person, that if any offered to pay the money, he might be present to pardon him.

Adriana stopped this melancholy procession, and cried out to the duke for justice, telling him that the abbess had refused to deliver up her lunatic husband to her care. While she was speaking, her real husband and his servant Dromio, who had got loose, came before the duke to demand justice, complaining that his wife had confined him on a false charge of lunacy; and telling in what manner he had broken his bands, and eluded the vigilance of his keepers. Adriana was strangely surprised to see her husband, when she thought he had been within the convent.

Ægeon, seeing his son, concluded this was the son who had left him to go in search of his mother and his brother; and he felt secure that this dear son would readily pay the money demanded for his ransom. He therefore spoke to Antipholus in words of fatherly affection, with joyful hope that he should now be released. But to the utter astonishment of Ægeon, his son denied all knowledge of him, as well he might for this Antipholus had never seen his father since they were separated in the storm in his infancy; but while the poor old Ægeon was in vain endeavouring to make his son acknowledge him, thinking surely that either his griefs and the anxieties he had suffered had so strangely altered him that his son did not know him, or else that he was ashamed to acknowledge his father in his misery; in the midst of this perplexity, the lady abbess and the other Antipholus and Dromio came out, and the wondering Adriana saw two husbands and two Dromios standing before her.

And now these riddling errors, which had so perplexed them all, were clearly made out. When the duke saw the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios both so exactly alike, he at once conjectured aright of these seeming mysteries, for he remembered the story Ægeon had told him in the morning; and he said, these men must be the two sons of Ægeon and their twin slaves.

But now an unlooked-for joy indeed completed the history of Ægeon; and the tale he had in the morning told in sorrow, and under sentence of death, before the setting sun went down was brought to a happy conclusion, for the venerable lady abbess made herself known to be the long-lost wife of Ægeon, and the fond mother of the two Antipholuses.

When the fishermen took the eldest Antipholus and Dromio away from her, she entered a nunnery, and by her wise and virtuous conduct, she was at length made lady abbess of this convent, and in discharging the rites of hospitality to an unhappy stranger she had unknowingly protected her own son.

Joyful congratulations and affectionate greetings between these long separated parents and their children made them for a while forget that Ægeon was yet under sentence of death; but when they were become a little calm, Antipholus of Ephesus offered the duke the ransom money for his father's life; but the duke freely pardoned Ægeon, and would not take the money. And the duke went with the abbess and her newly-found husband and children into the convent, to hear this happy family discourse at leisure of the blessed ending of their adverse fortunes. And the two Dromios' humble joy must not be forgotten; they had their congratulations and greetings too, and each Dromio pleasantly complimented his brother on his good looks, being well pleased to see his own person (as in a glass) show so handsome in his brother.

Adriana had so well profited by the good counsel of her mother-in-law, that she never after cherished unjust suspicions, or was jealous of her husband.

Antipholus of Syracuse married the fair Luciana, the sister of his brother's wife; and the good old Ægeon, with his wife and sons, lived at Ephesus many years. Nor did the unravelling of these perplexities so entirely remove every ground of mistake for the future, but that sometimes, to remind them of adventures past, comical blunders would happen, and the one Antipholus, and the one Dromio, be mistaken for the other, making altogether a pleasant and diverting Comedy of Errors.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

IN the city of Vienna there once reigned a duke of such a mild and gentle temper, that he suffered his subjects to neglect the laws with impunity; and there was in particular one law, the existence of which was almost forgotten, the duke never having put it in force during his whole reign. This was a law dooming any man to the punishment of death, who should live with a woman that was not his wife; and this law, through the lenity of the duke, being utterly disregarded, the holy institution of marriage became neglected, and complaints were every day made to the duke by the parents of the young ladies in Vienna, that their daughters had been seduced from their protection, and were living as the companions of single men.

The good duke perceived with sorrow this growing evil among his subjects; but he thought that a sudden change in himself from the indulgence he had hitherto shown, to the strict severity requisite to check this abuse, would make his people (who had hitherto loved him) consider him as a tyrant; therefore he determined to absent himself a while from his dukedom, and depute another to the full exercise of his power, that the law against these dishonourable lovers might be put in effect, without giving offence by an unusual severity in his own person.

Angelo, a man who bore the reputation of a saint in Vienna for his strict and rigid life, was chosen by the duke as a fit person to undertake this important charge; and when the duke imparted his design to lord Escalus, his chief counsellor, Escalus said, "If any man in Vienna be of worth to undergo such ample grace and honour, it is lord Angelo." And now the duke departed from Vienna under pretence of making a journey into Poland, leaving Angelo to act as the lord deputy in his absence; but the duke's absence was only a feigned one, for he privately returned to Vienna, habited like a friar, with the intent to watch unseen the conduct of the saintly-seeming Angelo.

It happened just about the time that Angelo was invested with his new dignity, that a gentleman, whose name was Claudio, had seduced a young lady from her parents; and for this offence, by command of the new lord deputy, Claudio was taken up and committed to prison, and by virtue of the old law which had been so long neglected, Angelo sentenced Claudio to be beheaded. Great interest was made for the pardon of young Claudio, and the good old lord Escalus himself interceded for him. "Alas," said he, "this gentleman whom I would save had an honourable father, for whose sake I pray you pardon the young man's transgression." But Angelo replied, "We must not make a scare-crow of the law, setting it up to frighten birds of prey, till custom, finding it harmless, makes it their perch, and not their terror. Sir, he must die."

Lucio, the friend of Claudio, visited him in the prison, and Claudio said to him, "I pray you, Lucio, do me this kind service. Go to my sister Isabel, who this day proposes to enter the convent of Saint Clare; acquaint her with the danger of my state; implore her that she make friends with the strict deputy; bid her go herself to Angelo. I have great hopes in that; for she can discourse with prosperous art, and well she can persuade; besides, there is a speechless dialect in youthful sorrow, such as moves men."

Isabel, the sister of Claudio, had, as he said, that day entered upon her noviciate in the convent, and it was her intent, after passing through her probation as a novice, to take the veil, and she was inquiring of a nun concerning the rules of the convent, when they heard the voice of Lucio, who, as he entered that religious house, said, "Peace be in this place!"—"Who is it that speaks?" said Isabel. "It is a man's voice," replied the nun: "Gentle Isabel, go to him, and learn his business; you may, I may not. When you have taken the veil, you must not speak with men but in the presence of the prioress; then if you speak you must not show your face, or if you show your face, you must not speak."—"And have you nuns no further privileges?" said Isabel. "Are not these large enough?" replied the nun. "Yes, truly," said Isabel: "I speak not as desiring more, but rather wishing a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare." Again they heard the voice of Lucio, and the nun said, "He calls again. I pray you answer him." Isabel then went out to Lucio, and in answer to his salutation, said, "Peace and Prosperity! Who is it that calls?" Then Lucio, approaching her with reverence, said, "Hail, virgin, if such you be, as the roses on your cheeks proclaim you are no less! can you bring me to the sight of Isabel, a novice of this place, and the fair sister to her unhappy brother Claudio?"—"Why her unhappy brother?" said Isabel, "let me ask! for I am that Isabel, and his sister."—"Fair and gentle lady," he replied, "your brother kindly greets you by me; he is in prison."—"Woe is me! for what?" said Isabel. Lucio then told her, Claudio was imprisoned for seducing a young maiden. "Ah," said she, "I fear it is my cousin Juliet." Juliet and Isabel were not related, but they called each other cousin in remembrance of their school days' friendship; and as Isabel knew that Juliet loved Claudio, she feared she had been led by her affection for him into this transgression. "She it is," replied Lucio. "Why then, let my brother marry Juliet," said Isabel. Lucio replied that Claudio would gladly marry Juliet, but that the lord deputy had sentenced him to die for his offence; "Unless," said he, "you have the grace by your fair prayer to soften Angelo, and that is my business between you and your poor brother."—"Alas!" said Isabel, "what poor ability is there in me to do him good? I doubt I have no power to move Angelo."—"Our doubts are traitors," said Lucio, "and make us lose the good we might often win, by fearing to attempt it. Go to lord Angelo! When maidens sue, and kneel, and weep, men give like gods."—"I will see what I can do," said Isabel: "I will but stay to give the prioress notice of the affair, and then I will go to Angelo. Commend me to my brother: soon at night I will send him word of my success."

Isabel hastened to the palace, and threw herself on her knees before Angelo, saying, "I am a woful suitor to your honour, if it will please your honour to hear me."—"Well, what is your suit?" said Angelo. She then made her petition in the most moving terms for her brother's life. But Angelo said, "Maiden, there is no remedy; your brother is sentenced, and he must die."—"O just, but severe law," said Isabel: "I had a brother then — Heaven keep your honour!" and she was about to depart. But Lucio, who had accompanied her, said, "Give it not over so; return to him again, entreat him, kneel down before him, hang upon his gown. You are too cold; if you should need a pin, you could not with a more tame tongue desire it." Then again Isabel on her knees implored for mercy. "He is sentenced," said Angelo: "it is too late."—"Too late!" said Isabel: "Why, no: I that do speak a word may call it back again. Believe this, my lord, no ceremony that to great ones belongs, not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword, the marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe, becomes them with one half so good a grace as mercy does."—"Pray you begone," said Angelo. But still Isabel entreated; and she said, "If my brother had been as you, and you as he, you might have slipped like him, but he, like you, would not have been so stern. I would to heaven I had your power, and you were Isabel. Should it then be thus? No, I would tell you what it were to be a judge, and what a prisoner."—"Be content, fair maid!" said Angelo: "it is the law, not I, condemns your brother. Were he my kinsman, my brother, or my son, it should be thus with him. He must die to-morrow."—"To-morrow?" said Isabel; "Oh, that is sudden: spare him, spare him; he is not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens we kill the fowl in season; shall we serve Heaven with less respect than we minister to our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you, none have died for my brother's offence, though many have committed it. So you would be the first that gives this sentence, and he the first that suffers it. Go to your own bosom, my lord; knock there, and ask your heart what it does know that is like my brother's fault; if it confess a natural guiltiness such as his is, let it not sound a thought against my brother's life!" Her last words more moved Angelo than all she had before said, for the beauty of Isabel had raised a guilty passion in his heart, and he began to form thoughts of dishonourable love, such as Claudio's crime had been; and the conflict in his mind made him to turn away from Isabel; but she called him back, saying, "Gentle my lord, turn back; hark, how I will bribe you. Good my lord, turn back!" —"How, bribe me!" said Angelo, astonished that she should think of offering him a bribe. "Ay," said Isabel, "with such gifts that Heaven itself shall share with you; not with golden treasures, or those glittering stones, whose price is either rich or poor as fancy values them, but with true prayers that shall be up to Heaven before sunrise,— prayers from preserved souls, from fasting maids whose minds are dedicated to nothing temporal."—"Well, come to me to-morrow," said Angelo. And for this short respite of her brother's life, and for this permission that she might be heard again, she left him with the joyful hope that she should at last prevail over his stern nature: and as she went away she said, "Heaven keep your honour safe! Heaven save your honour!" Which when Angelo heard, he said within his heart, "Amen, I would be saved from thee and from thy virtues:" and then, affrighted at his own evil thoughts, he said, "What is this? What is this? Do I love her, that I desire to hear her speak again, and feast upon her eyes? What is it I dream on? The cunning enemy of mankind, to catch a saint, with saints does bait the hook. Never could an immodest woman once stir my temper, but this virtuous woman subdues me quite. Even till now, when men were fond, I smiled and wondered at them."

In the guilty conflict in his mind Angelo suffered more that night than the prisoner he had so severely sentenced; for in the prison Claudio was visited by the good duke, who, in his friar's habit, taught the young man the way to heaven, preaching to him the words of penitence and peace. But Angelo felt all the pangs of irresolute guilt: now wishing to seduce Isabel from the paths of innocence and honour, and now suffering remorse and horror for a crime as yet but intentional. But in the end his evil thoughts prevailed; and he who had so lately started at the offer of a bribe, resolved to tempt this maiden with so high a bribe, as she might not be able to resist, even with the precious gift of her dear brother's life.

When Isabel came in the morning, Angelo desired she might be admitted alone to his presence: and being there, he said to her, if she would yield to him her virgin honour and transgress even as Juliet had done with Claudio, he would give her her brother's life; "For," said he, "I love you, Isabel."—"My brother," said Isabel, "did so love Juliet, and yet you tell me he shall die for it."—"But," said Angelo, "Claudio shall not die, if you will consent to visit me by stealth at night, even as Juliet left her father's house at night to come to Claudio." Isabel, in amazement at his words, that he should tempt her to the same fault for which he passed sentence upon her brother, said, "I would do as much for my poor brother as for myself; that is, were I under sentence of death, the impression of keen whips I would wear as rubies, and go to my death as to a bed that longing I had been sick for, ere I would yield myself up to this shame." And then she told him, she hoped he only spoke these words to try her virtue. But he said, "Believe me, on my honour, my words express my purpose." Isabel, angered to the heart to hear him use the word Honour to express such dishonourable purposes, said, "Ha! little honour to be much believed; and most pernicious purpose. I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for it! Sign me a present pardon for my brother, or I will tell the world aloud what man thou art!"—"Who will believe you, Isabel?" said Angelo; "my unsoiled name, the austereness of my life, my word vouched against yours, will outweigh your accusation. Redeem your brother by yielding to my will, or he shall die to-morrow. As for you, say what you can, my false will overweigh your true story. Answer me to-morrow."

"To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, who would believe me?" said Isabel, as she went towards the dreary prison where her brother was confined. When she arrived there, her brother was in pious conversation with the duke, who in his friar's habit had also visited Juliet, and brought both these guilty lovers to a proper sense of their fault; and unhappy Juliet with tears and a true remorse confessed that she was more to blame than Claudio, in that she willingly consented to his dishonourable solicitations.

As Isabel entered the room where Claudio was confined, she said, "Peace be here, grace, and good company!"—"Who is there?" said the disguised duke; "come in; the wish deserves a welcome."—"My business is a word or two with Claudio," said Isabel. Then the duke left them together, and desired the provost, who had the charge of the prisoners, to place him where he might overhear their conversation.

"Now, sister, what is the comfort?" said Claudio. Isabel told him he must prepare for death on the morrow. "Is there no remedy?" said Claudio.—"Yes, brother," replied Isabel, "there is; but such a one, as if you consented to it would strip your honour from you, and leave you naked."—"Let me know the point," said Claudio. "O, I do fear you, Claudio!" replied his sister; "and I quake, lest you should wish to live, and more respect the trifling term of six or seven winters added to your life, than your perpetual honour! Do you dare to die? The sense of death is most in apprehension, and the poor beetle that we tread upon, feels a pang as great as when a giant dies." "Why do you give me this shame?" said Claudio. "Think you I can fetch a resolution from flowery tenderness? If I must die, I will encounter darkness as a bride, and hug it in my arms."—"There spoke my brother," said Isabel; "there my father's grave did utter forth a voice. Yes, you must die; yet would you think it, Claudio! this outward sainted deputy, if I would yield to him my virgin honour, would grant your life. O, were it but my life, I would lay it down for your deliverance as frankly as a pin!"—"Thanks, dear Isabel," said Claudio. "Be ready to die to-morrow," said Isabel. "Death is a fearful thing," said Claudio. "And shamed life a hateful," replied his sister. But the thoughts of death now overcame the constancy of Claudio's temper, and terrors, such as the guilty only at their deaths do know, assailing him, he cried out, "Sweet sister, let me live! The sin you do to save a brother's life, nature dispenses with the deed so far, that it becomes a virtue."—"O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!" said Isabel; "would you preserve your life by your sister's shame? O fie, fie, fie! I thought, my brother, you had in you such a mind of honour, that had you twenty heads to render up on twenty blocks, you would have yielded them up all, before your sister should stoop to such dishonour." "Nay, hear me, Isabel!" said Claudio. But what he would have said in defence of his weakness, in desiring to live by the dishonour of his virtuous sister, was interrupted by the entrance of the duke; who said, "Claudio, I have overheard what has passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; what he said, has only been to make trial of her virtue. She having the truth of honour in her, has given him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. There is no hope that he will pardon you; therefore pass your hours in prayer, and make ready for death." Then Claudio repented of his weakness, and said, "Let me ask my sister's pardon! I am so out of love with life, that I will sue to be rid of it." And Claudio retired, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow for his fault.

The duke being now alone with Isabel, commended her virtuous resolution, saying, "The hand that made you fair, has made you good."—"O," said Isabel, "how much is the good duke deceived in Angelo! if ever he return, and I can speak to him, I will discover his government." Isabel knew not that she was even now making the discovery she threatened. The duke replied, "That shall not be much amiss; yet as the matter now stands, Angelo will repel your accusation; therefore lend an attentive ear to my advisings. I believe that you may most righteously do a poor wronged lady a merited benefit, redeem your brother from the angry law, do no stain to your own most gracious person, and much please the absent duke, if peradventure he shall ever return to have notice of this business." Isabel said, she had a spirit to do anything he desired, provided it was nothing wrong. "Virtue is bold, and never fearful," said the duke: and then he asked her, if she had ever heard of Mariana, the sister of Frederick, the great soldier who was drowned at sea. "I have heard of the lady," said Isabel, "and good words went with her name."—"This lady," said the duke, "is the wife of Angelo; but her marriage dowry was on board the vessel in which her brother perished, and mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman! for, beside the loss of a most noble and renowned brother, who in his love towards her was ever most kind and natural, in the wreck of her fortune she lost the affections of her husband, the well-seeming Angelo; who pretending to discover some dishonour in this honourable lady (though the true cause was the loss of her dowry) left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort. His unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, has, like an impediment in the current, made it more unruly, and Mariana loves her cruel husband with the full continuance of her first affection." The duke then more plainly unfolded his plan. It was, that Isabel should go to lord Angelo, and seemingly consent to come to him as he desired at midnight; that by this means she would obtain the promised pardon; and that Mariana should go in her stead to the appointment, and pass herself upon Angelo in the dark for Isabel. "Nor, gentle daughter," said the feigned friar, "fear you to do this thing; Angelo is her husband, and to bring them thus together is no sin." Isabel being pleased with this project, departed to do as he directed her; and he went to apprise Mariana of their intention. He had before this time visited this unhappy lady in his assumed character, giving her religious instruction and friendly consolation, at which times he had learned her sad story from her own lips; and now she, looking upon him as a holy man, readily consented to be directed by him in this undertaking.

When Isabel returned from her interview with Angelo, to the house of Mariana, where the duke had appointed her to meet him, he said, " Well met, and in good time; what is the news from this good deputy? " Isabel related the manner in which she had settled the affair. " Angelo," said she, " has a garden surrounded with a brick wall, on the western side of which is a vineyard, and to that vineyard is a gate." And then she showed to the duke and Mariana two keys that Angelo had given her; and she said, " This bigger key opens the vineyard gate; this other a little door which leads from the vineyard to the garden. There I have made my promise at the dead of the night to call upon him, and have got from him his word of assurance for my brother's life. I have taken a due and wary note of the place; and with whispering and most guilty diligence he showed me the way twice over."—" Are there no other tokens agreed upon between you, that Mariana must observe? " said the duke. " No, none," said Isabel, " only to go when it is dark. I have told him my time can be but short; for I have made him think a servant comes along with me, and that this servant is persuaded I come about my brother." The duke commended her discreet management, and she, turning to Mariana, said, " Little have you to say to Angelo, when you depart from him, but soft and low, *Remember now my brother!* "

Mariana was that night conducted to the appointed place by Isabel, who rejoiced that she had, as she supposed, by this device preserved both her brother's life and her own honour. But that her brother's life was safe the duke was not well satisfied, and therefore at midnight he again repaired to the prison, and it was well for Claudio that he did so, else would Claudio have that night been beheaded; for soon after the duke entered the prison, an order came from the cruel deputy, commanding that Claudio should be beheaded, and his head sent to him by five o'clock in the morning.

But the duke persuaded the provost to put off the execution of Claudio, and to deceive Angelo, by sending him the head of a man who died that morning in the prison. And to prevail upon the provost to agree to this, the duke, whom still the provost suspected not to be anything more or greater than he seemed, showed the provost a letter written with the duke's hand, and sealed with his seal, which when the provost saw, he concluded this friar must have some secret order from the absent duke, and therefore he consented to spare Claudio; and he cut off the dead man's head, and carried it to Angelo.

Then the duke in his own name, wrote to Angelo a letter, saying, that certain accidents had put a stop to his journey, and that he should be in Vienna by the following morning, requiring Angelo to meet him at the entrance of the city, there to deliver up his authority; and the duke also commanded it to be proclaimed, that if any of his subjects craved redress for injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street on his first entrance into the city.

Early in the moring Isabel came to the prison, and the duke, who there awaited her coming, for secret reasons thought it good to tell her that Claudio was beheaded; therefore when Isabel inquired if Angelo had sent the pardon for her brother, he said, "Angelo has released Claudio from this world. His head is off, and sent to the deputy." The much-grieved sister cried out, "O unhappy Claudio, wretched Isabel, injurious world, most wicked Angelo!" The seeming friar bid her take comfort, and when she was become a little calm, he acquainted her with the near prospect of the duke's return, and told her in what manner she should proceed in preferring her complaint against Angelo; and he bade her not fear if the cause should seem to go against her for a while. Leaving Isabel sufficiently instructed, he next went to Mariana, and gave her counsel in what manner she also should act.

Then the duke laid aside his friar's habit, and in his own royal robes, amidst a joyful crowd of his faithful subjects, assembled to greet his arrival, entered the city of Vienna, where he was met by

Angelo, who delivered up his authority in the proper form. And there came Isabel, in the manner of a petitioner for redress, and said, "Justice, most royal duke! I am the sister of one Claudio, who, for the seducing a young maid, was condemned to lose his head. I made my suit to lord Angelo for my brother's pardon. It were needless to tell your grace how I prayed and kneeled, how he repelled me, and how I replied; for this was of much length. The vile conclusion I now begin with grief and shame to utter. Angelo would not but by my yielding to his dishonourable love release my brother; and after much debate within myself, my sisterly remorse overcame my virtue, and I did yield to him. But the next morning betimes, Angelo, forfeiting his promise, sent a warrant for my poor brother's head!" The duke affected to disbelieve her story; and Angelo said that grief for her brother's death, who had suffered by the due course of the law, had disordered her senses. And now another suitor approached, which was Mariana; and Mariana said, "Noble prince, as there comes light from heaven, and truth from breath, as there is sense in truth and truth in virtue, I am this man's wife, and, my good lord, the words of Isabel are false; for the night she says she was with Angelo, I passed that night with him in the garden-house. As this is true, let me in safety rise, or else for ever be fixed here a marble monument." Then did Isabel appeal for the truth of what she had said to friar Lodowick, that being the name the duke had assumed in his disguise. Isabel and Mariana had both obeyed his instructions in what they said, the duke intending that the innocence of Isabel should be plainly proved in that public manner before the whole city of Vienna; but Angelo little thought that it was from such a cause that they thus differed in their story, and he hoped from their contradictory evidence to be able to clear himself from the accusation of Isabel; and he said, assuming the look of offended innocence, "I did but smile till now; but, good my lord, my patience here is touched, and I perceive these poor distracted women are but the instruments of some greater one, who sets them on. Let me have way, my lord, to find this practice out."—"Ay, with all my heart," said the duke, "and punish them to the height of your pleasure. You, lord Escalus, sit with lord Angelo, lend him your pains to discover this abuse; the friar is sent for that set them on, and when he comes, do with your injuries as may seem best in any chastisement. I for a while will leave you, but stir not you, lord Angelo, till you have well determined upon this slander." The duke then went away, leaving Angelo well pleased to be deputed judge and umpire in his own cause. But the duke was absent only while he threw off his royal robes and put on his friar's habit; and in that disguise again he presented himself before Angelo and Escalus: and the good old Escalus, who thought Angelo had been falsely accused, said to the supposed friar, "Come, sir, did you set these women on to slander lord Angelo?" He replied, "Where is the duke? It is he who should hear me speak." Escalus said, "The duke is in us, and we will hear you. Speak justly."—"Boldly at least," retorted the friar; and then he blamed the duke for leaving the cause of Isabel in the hands of him she had accused, and spoke so freely of many corrupt practices he had observed, while, as he said, he had been a looker-on in Vienna, that Escalus threatened him with the torture for speaking words against the state, and for censuring the conduct of the duke, and ordered him to be taken away to prison. Then, to the amazement of all present, and to the utter confusion of Angelo, the supposed friar threw off his disguise, and they saw it was the duke himself.

The duke first addressed Isabel. He said to her, "Come hither, Isabel. Your friar is now your prince, but with my habit I have not changed my heart. I am still devoted to your service." "O give me pardon," said Isabel, "that I, your vassal, have employed and troubled your unknown sovereignty." He answered that he had most need of forgiveness from her, for not having prevented the death of her brother — for not yet would he tell her that Claudio was living; meaning first to make further trial of her goodness. Angelo now knew the duke had been a secret witness of his bad deeds, and he said, "O my dread lord, I should be guiltier than my guiltiness, to think I can be undiscernible, when I perceive your grace, like power divine, has looked upon my actions. Then, good prince, no longer prolong my shame, but let my trial be my own confession. Immediate sentence and death is all the grace I beg." The duke replied, "Angelo, thy faults are manifest. We do condemn thee to the very block where Claudio stooped to death; and with like haste away with him; and for his possessions, Mariana, we do instate and widow you withal, to buy you a better husband."—"O my dear lord," said Mariana, "I crave no other, nor no better man:" and then on her knees, even as Isabel had begged the life of Claudio, did this kind wife of an ungrateful husband beg the life of Angelo; and she said, "Gentle my liege, O good my lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part! Lend me your knees, and all my life to come I will lend you all my life, to do you service!" The duke said, "Against all sense you importune her. Should Isabel kneel down to beg for mercy, her brother's ghost would break his paved bed, and take her hence in horror." Still Mariana said, "Isabel, sweet Isabel, do but kneel by me, hold up your hand, say nothing! I will speak all. They say, best men are moulded out of faults, and for the most part become much the better for being a little bad. So may my husband. Oh, Isabel, will you not lend a knee?" The duke then said, "He dies for Claudio." But much pleased was the good duke, when his own Isabel, from whom he expected all gracious and honourable acts, kneeled down before him, and said, "Most bounteous sir, look, if it please you, on this man condemned, as if my brother lived. I partly think a due sincerity governed his deeds, till he did look on me. Since it is so, let him not die! My brother had but justice, in that he did the thing for which he died."

The duke, as the best reply he could make to this noble petitioner for her enemy's life, sending for Claudio from his prison-house, where he lay doubtful of his destiny, presented to her this lamented brother living; and he said to Isabel, "Give me your hand, Isabel;

for your lovely sake I pardon Claudio. Say you will be mine, and he shall be my brother too." By this time lord Angelo perceived he was safe; and the duke, observing his eye to brighten up a little, said, "Well, Angelo, look that you love your wife; her worth has obtained your pardon: joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo! I have confessed her, and know her virtue." Angelo remembered, when dressed in a little brief authority, how hard his heart had been, and felt how sweet is mercy.

The duke commanded Claudio to marry Juliet, and offered himself again to the acceptance of Isabel, whose virtuous and noble conduct had won her prince's heart. Isabel, not having taken the veil, was free to marry; and the friendly offices, while hid under the disguise of a humble friar, which the noble duke had done for her, made her with grateful joy accept the honour he offered her; and when she became duchess of Vienna, the excellent example of the virtuous Isabel worked such a complete reformation among the young ladies of that city, that from that time none ever fell into the transgression of Juliet, the repentant wife of the reformed Claudio. And the mercy-loving duke long reigned with his beloved Isabel, the happiest of husbands and of princes.

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL

SEBASTIAN and his sister Viola, a young gentleman and lady of Messaline, were twins, and (which was accounted a great wonder) from their birth they so much resembled each other, that, but for the difference in their dress, they could not be known apart. They were both born in one hour, and in one hour they were both in danger of perishing, for they were shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria, as they were making a sea-voyage together. The ship, on board of which they were, split on a rock in a violent storm, and a very small number of the ship's company escaped with their lives. The captain of the vessel, with a few of the sailors that were saved, got to land in a small boat, and with them they brought Viola safe on shore, where she, poor lady, instead of rejoicing at her own deliverance, began to lament her brother's loss; but the captain comforted her with the assurance that he had seen her brother, when the ship split, fasten himself to a strong mast, on which, as long as he could see anything of him for the distance, he perceived him borne up above the waves. Viola was much consoled by the hope this account gave her, and now considered how she was to dispose of herself in a strange country, so far from home; and she asked the captain if he knew anything of Illyria. "Ay, very well, madam," replied the captain, "for I was born not three hours' travel from this place."—"Who governs here?" said Viola. The captain told her, Illyria was governed by Orsino, a duke noble in nature as well as dignity. Viola said, she had heard her father speak of Orsino, and that he was unmarried then. "And he is so now," said the captain; "or was so very lately, for, but a month ago, I went from here, and then it was the general talk (as you know what great ones do, the people will prattle of) that Orsino sought the love of fair Olivia, a virtuous maid, the daughter of a count who died twelve months ago, leaving Olivia to the protection of her brother, who shortly after died also; and for the love of this dear brother, they say, she has abjured the sight and company of men." Viola, who was herself in such a sad affliction for her brother's loss, wished she could live with this lady, who so tenderly mourned a brother's death. She asked the captain if he could introduce her to Olivia, saying she would willingly serve this lady. But he replied, this would be a hard thing to accomplish, because the Lady Olivia would admit no person into her house since her brother's death, not even the duke himself. Then Viola formed another project in her mind, which was, in a man's habit, to serve the duke Orsino as a page. It was a strange fancy in a young lady to put on male attire, and pass for a boy; but the forlorn and unprotected state of Viola, who was young and of uncommon beauty, alone, and in a foreign land, must plead her excuse.

She having observed a fair behaviour in the captain, and that he showed a friendly concern for her welfare, entrusted him with her design, and he readily engaged to assist her. Viola gave him money, and directed him to furnish her with suitable apparel, ordering her clothes to be made of the same colour and in the same fashion her brother Sebastian used to wear, and when she was dressed in her manly garb, she looked so exactly like her brother that some strange errors happened by means of their being mistaken for each other; for, as will afterwards appear, Sebastian was also saved.

Viola's good friend, the captain, when he had transformed this pretty lady into a gentleman, having some interest at court, got her presented to Orsino under the feigned name of Cesario. The duke was wonderfully pleased with the address and graceful deportment of this handsome youth, and made Cesario one of his pages, that being the office Viola wished to obtain: and she so well fulfilled the duties of her new station, and showed such a ready observance and faithful attachment to her lord, that she soon became his most favoured attendant. To Cesario Orsino confided the whole history of his love for the lady Olivia. To Cesario he told the long and unsuccessful suit he had made to one who, rejecting his long services, and despising his person, refused to admit him to her presence; and for the love of this lady who had so unkindly treated him, the noble Orsino, forsaking the sports of the field and all manly exercises in which he used to delight, passed his hours in ignoble sloth, listening to the effeminate sounds of soft music, gentle airs, and passionate love-songs; and neglecting the company of the wise and learned lords with whom he used to associate, he was now all day long conversing with young Cesario. Unmeet companion no doubt his grave courtiers thought Cesario was for their once noble master, the great duke Orsino.

It is a dangerous matter for young maidens to be the confidants of handsome young dukes; which Viola too soon found to her sorrow, for all that Orsino told her he endured for Olivia, she presently perceived she suffered for the love of him; and much it moved her wonder, that Olivia could be so regardless of this her peerless lord and master, whom she thought no one could behold without the deepest admiration, and she ventured gently to hint to Orsino, that it was a pity he should affect a lady who was so blind to his worthy qualities; and she said, " If a lady were to love you, my lord, as you love Olivia (and perhaps there may be one who does), if you could not love her in return, would you not tell her that you could not love, and must she not be content with this answer? " But Orsino would not admit of this reasoning, for he denied that it was possible for any woman to love as he did. He said, no woman's heart was big enough to hold so much love, and therefore it was unfair to compare the love of any lady for him, to his love for Olivia. Now, though Viola had the utmost deference for the duke's opinions, she could not help thinking this was not quite true, for she thought her heart had full as much love in it as Orsino's had; and she said, " Ah, but I know, my lord."—" What do you know, Cesario? " said Orsino. " Too well I know," replied Viola, " what love women may owe to men. They are as true of heart as we are.

My father had a daughter loved a man, as I perhaps, were I a woman, should love your lordship."—"And what is her history?" said Orsino. "A blank, my lord," replied Viola: "she never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought, and with a green and yellow melancholy, she sat like Patience on a monument, smiling at Grief." The duke inquired if this lady died of her love, but to this question Viola returned an evasive answer; as probably she had feigned the story, to speak words expressive of the secret love and silent grief she suffered for Orsino.

While they were talking, a gentleman entered whom the duke had sent to Olivia, and he said, "So please you, my lord, I might not be admitted to the lady, but by her handmaid she returned you this answer: Until seven years hence, the element itself shall not behold her face; but like a cloistress she will walk veiled, watering her chamber with her tears for the sad remembrance of her dead brother." On hearing this, the duke exclaimed, "O she that has a heart of this fine frame, to pay this debt of love to a dead brother, how will she love, when the rich golden shaft has touched her heart!" And then he said to Viola, "You know, Cesario, I have told you all the secrets of my heart; therefore, good youth, go to Olivia's house. Be not denied access; stand at her doors, and tell her, there your fixed foot shall grow till you have audience."—"And if I do speak to her, my lord, what then?" said Viola. "O then;" replied Orsino, "unfold to her the passion of my love. Make a long discourse to her of my dear faith. It will well become you to act my woes, for she will attend more to you than to one of graver aspect."

Away then went Viola; but not willingly did she undertake this courtship, for she was to woo a lady to become a wife to him she wished to marry: but having undertaken the affair, she performed it with fidelity; and Olivia soon heard that a youth was at her door who insisted upon being admitted to her presence. "I told him," said the servant, "that you were sick: he said he knew you were, and therefore he came to speak with you. I told him that you were asleep: he seemed to have a foreknowledge of that too, and said, that therefore he must speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? for he seems fortified against all denial, and will speak with you, whether you will or no." Olivia, curious to see who this peremptory messenger might be, desired he might be admitted; and throwing her veil over her face, she said she would once more hear Orsino's embassy, not doubting but that he came from the duke, by his importunity. Viola, entering, put on the most manly air she could assume, and affecting the fine courtier language of great men's pages, she said to the veiled lady, "Most radiant, exquisite, and matchless beauty, I pray you tell me if you are the lady of the house; for I should be sorry to cast away my speech upon another; for besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to learn it."—"Whence come you, sir?" said Olivia. "I can say little more than I have studied," replied Viola; "and that question is out of my part."—"Are you a comedian?" said Olivia. "No," replied Viola; "and yet I am not that which I play;" meaning that she, being a woman, feigned herself to be a man. And again she asked Olivia if she were the lady of the house. Olivia said she was; and then Viola, having more curiosity to see her rival's features, than haste to deliver her master's message, said, "Good madam, let me see your face." With this bold request Olivia was not averse to comply; for this haughty beauty, whom the duke Orsino had loved so long in vain, at first sight conceived a passion for the supposed page, the humble Cesario.

When Viola asked to see her face, Olivia said, "Have you any commission from your lord and master to negotiate with my face?" And then, forgetting her determination to go veiled for seven long years, she drew aside her veil, saying, "But I will draw the curtain and show the picture. Is it not well done?" Viola replied, "It is beauty truly mixed; the red and white upon your cheeks is by Nature's own cunning hand laid on. You are the most cruel lady living, if you will lead these graces to the grave, and leave the world no copy."—" O, sir," replied Olivia, " I will not be so cruel. The world may have an inventory of my beauty. As, *item,* two lips, indifferent red; *item,* two grey eyes, with lids to them; one neck; one chin; and so forth. Were you sent here to praise me?" Viola replied, " I see what you are: you are too proud, but you are fair. My lord and master loves you. O such a love could but be recompensed, though you were crowned the queen of beauty: for Orsino loves you with adoration and with tears, with groans that thunder love, and sighs of fire."—" Your lord," said Olivia, " knows well my mind. I cannot love him; yet I doubt not he is virtuous; I know him to be noble and of high estate, of fresh and spotless youth. All voices proclaim him learned, courteous, and valiant; yet I cannot love him, he might have taken his answer long ago."—" If I did love you as my master does," said Viola, " I would make me a willow cabin at your gates, and call upon your name, I would write complaining sonnets on Olivia, and sing them in the dead of the night; your name should sound among the hills, and I would make Echo, the babbling gossip of the air, cry out *Olivia.* O you should not rest between the elements of earth and air, but you should pity me."—" You might do much," said Olivia: " what is your parentage?" Viola replied, " Above my fortunes, yet my state is well. I am a gentleman." Olivia now reluctantly dismissed Viola, saying, " Go to your master, and tell him, I cannot love him. Let him send no more, unless perchance you come again to tell me how he takes it." And Viola departed, bidding the lady farewell by the name of Fair Cruelty. When she was gone Olivia repeated the words, *Above my fortunes, yet my state is well. I am a gentleman.* And she said aloud, " I will be sworn he is; his tongue, his face, his limbs, action, and spirit, plainly show he is a gentleman." And then she wished Cesario was the duke; and perceiving the fast hold he had taken on her affections, she blamed herself for her sudden love: but the gentle blame which people lay upon their own faults has no deep root; and presently the noble lady Olivia so far forgot the inequality between her fortunes and those of this seeming page, as well as the maidenly reserve which is the chief ornament of a lady's character, that she resolved to court the love of young Cesario, and sent a servant after him with a diamond ring, under the pretence that he had left it with her as a present from Orsino. She hoped by thus artfully making Cesario a present of the ring, she should give him some intimation of her design; and truly it did make Viola suspect; for knowing that Orsino had sent no ring by her, she began to recollect that Olivia's looks and manner were expressive of admiration, and she presently guessed her master's mistress had fallen in love with her. "Alas," said she, "the poor lady might as well love a dream. Disguise I see is wicked, for it has caused Olivia to breathe as fruitless sighs for me as I do for Orsino."

Viola returned to Orsino's palace, and related to her lord the ill success of the negotiation, repeating the command of Olivia, that the duke should trouble her no more. Yet still the duke persisted in hoping that the gentle Cesario would in time be able to persuade her to show some pity, and therefore he bade him he should go to her again the next day. In the mean time, to pass away the tedious interval, he commanded a song which he loved to be sung; and he said, "My good Cesario, when I heard that song last night, methought it did relieve my passion much. Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain. The spinsters and the knitters when they sit in the sun, and the young maids that weave their thread with bone, chant this song. It is silly, yet I love it, for it tells of the innocence of love in the old times."

SONG

Come away, come away, Death,
  And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath,
  I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white stuck all with yew, O prepare it!
My part of death no one so true did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strewn;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand thousand sighs to save, lay me O where
Sad true lover never find my grave, to weep there!

Viola did not fail to mark the words of the old song, which in such true simplicity described the pangs of unrequited love, and she bore testimony in her countenance of feeling what the song expressed. Her sad looks were observed by Orsino, who said to her, "My life upon it, Cesario, though you are so young, your eye has looked upon some face that it loves: has it not, boy?"—"A little, with your leave," replied Viola. "And what kind of woman, and of what age is she?" said Orsino. "Of your age and of your complexion, my lord," said Viola; which made the duke smile to hear this fair young boy loved a woman so much older than himself, and of a man's dark complexion; but Viola secretly meant Orsino, and not a woman like him.

When Viola made her second visit to Olivia, she found no difficulty in gaining access to her. Servants soon discover when their ladies delight to converse with handsome young messengers; and the instant Viola arrived, the gates were thrown wide open, and the duke's page was shown into Olivia's apartment with great respect; and when Viola told Olivia that she was come once more to plead in her lord's behalf, this lady said, "I desired you never to speak of him again; but if you would undertake another suit, I had rather hear you solicit, than music from the spheres." This was pretty plain speaking, but Olivia soon explained herself still more plainly, and openly confessed her love; and when she saw displeasure with perplexity expressed in Viola's face, she said, "O what a deal of scorn looks beautiful in the contempt and anger of his lip! Cesario, by the roses of the spring, by maidhood, honour, and by truth, I love you so, that, in spite of your pride, I have neither wit nor reason to conceal my passion." But in vain the lady wooed; Viola hastened from her presence, threatening never more to come to plead Orsino's love; and all the reply she made to Olivia's fond solicitation was, a declaration of a resolution *Never to love any woman.*

No sooner had Viola left the lady than a claim was made upon her valour. A gentleman, a rejected suitor of Olivia, who had learned how that lady had favoured the duke's messenger, challenged him to fight a duel. What should poor Viola do, who, though she carried a manlike outside, had a true woman's heart, and feared to look on her own sword?

When she saw her formidable rival advancing towards her with his sword drawn, she began to think of confessing that she was a woman; but she was relieved at once from her terror, and the shame of such a discovery, by a stranger that was passing by, who made up to them, and as if he had been long known to her, and were her dearest friend, said to her opponent, "If this young gentleman has done offence, I will take the fault on me; and if you offend him, I will for his sake defy you." Before Viola had time to thank him for his protection, or to inquire the reason of this kind interference, her new friend met with an enemy where his bravery was of no use to him; for the officers of justice coming up in that instant, apprehended the stranger in the duke's name, to answer for an offence he had committed some years before: and he said to Viola, "This comes with seeking you:" and then he asked her for a purse, saying, "Now my necessity makes me ask for my purse, and it grieves me much more for what I cannot do for you, than for what befalls myself. You stand amazed, but be of comfort." His words did indeed amaze Viola, and she protested she knew him not, nor had ever received a purse from him; but for the kindness he had just shown her, she offered him a small sum of money, being nearly the whole she possessed. And now the stranger spoke severe things, charging her with ingratitude and unkindness. He said, "This youth, whom you see here, I snatched from the jaws of death, and for his sake alone I came to Illyria, and have fallen into this danger." But the officers cared little for hearkening to the complaints of their prisoner, and they hurried him off saying, "What is that to us?" And as he was carried away, he called Viola by the name of Sebastian, reproaching the supposed Sebastian for disowning his friend, as long as he was within hearing. When Viola heard herself called Sebastian, though the stranger was taken away too hastily for her to ask an explanation, she conjectured that this seeming mystery might arise from her being mistaken for her brother; and she began to cherish hopes that it was her brother whose life this man said he had preserved. And so indeed it was. The stranger, whose name was Antonio, was a sea-captain. He had taken Sebastian up into his ship, when, almost exhausted with fatigue, he was floating on the mast to which he had fastened himself in the storm. Antonio conceived such a friendship for Sebastian, that he resolved to accompany him whithersoever he went; and when the youth expressed a curiosity to visit Orsino's court, Antonio, rather than part from him came to Illyria, though he knew, if his person should be known there, his life would be in danger, because in a sea-fight he had once dangerously wounded the duke Orsino's nephew. This was the offence for which he was now made a prisoner.

Antonio and Sebastian had landed together but a few hours before Antonio met Viola. He had given his purse to Sebastian, desiring him to use it freely if he saw anything he wished to purchase, telling him he would wait at the inn, while Sebastian went to view the town; but Sebastian not returning at the time appointed, Antonio had ventured out to look for him, and Viola being dressed the same, and in face so exactly resembling her brother, Antonio drew his sword (as he thought) in defence of the youth he had saved, and when Sebastian (as he supposed) disowned him, and denied him his own purse, no wonder he accused him of ingratitude.

Viola, when Antonio was gone, fearing a second invitation to fight, slunk home as fast as she could. She had not been long gone, when her adversary thought he saw her return; but it was her brother Sebastian, who happened to arrive at this place, and he said, "Now, sir, have I met with you again? There's for you;" and struck him a blow. Sebastian was no coward; he returned the blow with interest, and drew his sword.

A lady now put a stop to this duel, for Olivia came out of the house, and she too mistaking Sebastian for Cesario, invited him to come into her house, expressing much sorrow at the rude attack he had met with. Though Sebastian was as much surprised at the courtesy of this lady as at the rudeness of his unknown foe, yet he went very willingly into the house, and Olivia was delighted to find Cesario (as she thought him) become more sensible of her attentions; for though their features were exactly the same, there was none of the contempt and anger to be seen in his face, which she had complained of when she told her love to Cesario.

Sebastian did not at all object to the fondness the lady lavished on him. He seemed to take it in very good part, yet he wondered how it had come to pass, and he was rather inclined to think Olivia was not in her right senses; but perceiving that she was mistress of a fine house, and that she ordered her affairs and seemed to govern her family discreetly, and that in all but her sudden love for him she appeared in the full possession of her reason, he well approved of the courtship; and Olivia finding Cesario in this good humour, and fearing he might change his mind, proposed that, as she had a priest in the house, they should be instantly married. Sebastian assented to this proposal; and when the marriage ceremony was over, he left his lady for a short time, intending to go and tell his friend Antonio the good fortune that he had met with. In the meantime Orsino came to visit Olivia: and at the moment he arrived before Olivia's house, the officers of justice brought their prisoner, Antonio, before the duke. Viola was with Orsino, her master; and when Antonio saw Viola, whom he still imagined to be Sebastian, he told the duke in what manner he had rescued this youth from the perils of the sea; and after fully relating all the kindness he had really shown to Sebastian, he ended his complaint with saying, that for three months, both day and night, this ungrateful youth had been with him. But now the lady Olivia coming forth from her house, the duke could no longer attend to Antonio's story; and he said, "Here comes the countess: now Heaven walks on earth! but for thee, fellow, thy words are madness. Three months has this youth attended on me:" and then he ordered Antonio to be taken aside. But Orsino's heavenly countess soon gave the duke cause to accuse Cesario as much of ingratitude as Antonio had done, for all the words he could hear Olivia speak were words of kindness to Cesario: and when he found his page had obtained this high place in Olivia's favour, he threatened him with all the terrors of his just revenge; and as he was going to depart, he called Viola to follow him, saying, "Come, boy, with me. My thoughts are ripe for mischief." Though it seemed in his jealous rage he was going to doom Viola to instant death, yet her love made her no longer a coward, and she said she would most joyfully suffer death to give her master ease. But Olivia would not so lose her husband, and she cried, "Where goes my Cesario?" Viola replied, "After him I love more than my life." Olivia, however, prevented their departure by loudly proclaiming that Cesario was her husband, and sent for the priest, who declared that not two hours had passed since he had married the lady Olivia to this young man. In vain Viola protested she was not married to Olivia; the evidence of that lady and the priest made Orsino believe that his page had robbed him of the treasure he prized above his life. But thinking that it was past recall, he was bidding farewell to his faithless mistress, and the *young dissembler,* her husband, as he called Viola, warning her never to come in his sight again, when (as it seemed to them) a miracle appeared! for another Cesario entered, and addressed Olivia as his wife. This new Cesario was Sebastian, the real husband of Olivia; and when their wonder had a little ceased at seeing two persons with the same face, the same voice, and the same habit, the brother and sister began to question each other; for Viola could scarce be persuaded that her brother was living, and Sebastian knew not how to account for the sister he supposed drowned being found in the habit of a young man. But Viola presently acknowledged that she was indeed Viola, and his sister, under that disguise.

When all the errors were cleared up which the extreme likeness between this twin brother and sister had occasioned, they laughed at the lady Olivia for the pleasant mistake she had made in falling in love with a woman; and Olivia showed no dislike to her exchange, when she found she had wedded the brother instead of the sister.

The hopes of Orsino were for ever at an end by this marriage of Olivia, and with his hopes, all his fruitless love seemed to vanish away, and all his thoughts were fixed on the event of his favourite, young Cesario, being changed into a fair lady. He viewed Viola with great attention, and he remembered how very handsome he had always thought Cesario was, and he concluded she would look very beautiful in a woman's attire; and then he remembered how often she had said *she loved him*, which at the time seemed only the dutiful expressions of a faithful page; but now he guessed that something more was meant, for many of her pretty sayings, which were like riddles to him, came now into his mind, and he no sooner remembered all these things than he resolved to make Viola his wife; and he said to her (he still could not help calling her *Cesario* and *boy*), "Boy, you have said to me a thousand times that you should never love a woman like to me, and for the faithful service you have done for me so much beneath your soft and tender breeding, and since you have called me master so long, you shall now be your master's mistress, and Orsino's true duchess."

Olivia, perceiving Orsino was making over that heart, which she had so ungraciously rejected, to Viola, invited them to enter her house, and offered the assistance of the good priest, who had married her to Sebastian in the morning, to perform the same ceremony in the remaining part of the day for Orsino and Viola. Thus the twin brother and sister were both wedded on the same day: the storm and shipwreck, which had separated them, being the means of bringing to pass their high and mighty fortunes. Viola was the wife of Orsino, the duke of Illyria, and Sebastian the husband of the rich and noble countess, the lady Olivia.

TIMON OF ATHENS

TIMON, a lord of Athens, in the enjoyment of a princely fortune, affected a humour of liberality which knew no limits. His almost infinite wealth could not flow in so fast, but he poured it out faster upon all sorts and degrees of people. Not the poor only tasted of his bounty, but great lords did not disdain to rank themselves among his dependants and followers. His table was resorted to by all the luxurious feasters, and his house was open to all comers and goers at Athens. His large wealth combined with his free and prodigal nature to subdue all hearts to his love; men of all minds and dispositions tendered their services to lord Timon, from the glass-faced flatterer, whose face reflects as in a mirror the present humour of his patron, to the rough and unbending cynic, who affecting a contempt of men's persons, and an indifference to worldly things, yet could not stand out against the gracious manners and munificent soul of lord Timon, but would come (against his nature) to partake of his royal entertainments, and return most rich in his own estimation if he had received a nod or a salutation from Timon.

If a poet had composed a work which wanted a recommendatory introduction to the world, he had no more to do but to dedicate it to lord Timon, and the poem was sure of sale, besides a present purse from the patron, and daily access to his house and table. If a painter had a picture to dispose of, he had only to take it to lord Timon, and pretend to consult his taste as to the merits of it; nothing more was wanting to persuade the liberal-hearted lord to buy it. If a jeweller had a stone of price, or a mercer rich costly stuffs, which for their costliness lay upon his hands, lord Timon's house was a ready mart always open, where they might get off their wares or their jewellery at any price, and the good-natured lord would thank them into the bargain, as if they had done him a piece of courtesy in letting him have the refusal of such precious commodities. So that by this means his house was thronged with superfluous purchases, of no use but to swell uneasy and ostentatious pomp; and his person was still more inconveniently beset with a crowd of these idle visitors, lying poets, painters, sharking tradesmen, lords, ladies, needy courtiers, and expectants, who continually filled his lobbies, raining their fulsome flatteries in whispers in his ears, sacrificing to him with adulation as to a God, making sacred the very stirrup by which he mounted his horse, and seeming as though they drank the free air but through his permission and bounty.

Some of these daily dependants were young men of birth, who (their means not answering to their extravagance) had been put in prison by creditors, and redeemed thence by lord Timon; these young prodigals thenceforward fastened upon his lordship, as if by common sympathy he were necessarily endeared to all such spendthrifts and loose livers, who, not being able to follow him in his wealth, found it easier to copy him in prodigality and copious spending of what was their own. One of these flesh-flies was Ventidius, for whose debts, unjustly contracted, Timon but lately had paid down the sum of five talents.

But among this confluence, this great flood of visitors, none were more conspicuous than the makers of presents and givers of gifts. It was fortunate for these men if Timon took a fancy to a dog or a horse, or any piece of cheap furniture which was theirs. The thing so praised, whatever it was, was sure to be sent the next morning with the compliments of the giver for lord Timon's acceptance, and apologies for the unworthiness of the gift; and this dog or horse, or whatever it might be, did not fail to produce from Timon's bounty, who would not be outdone in gifts, perhaps twenty dogs or horses, certainly presents of far richer worth, as these pretended donors knew well enough, and that their false presents were but the putting out of so much money at large and speedy interest. In this way lord Lucius had lately sent to Timon a present of four milk-white horses, trapped in silver, which this cunning lord had observed Timon upon some occasion to commend; and another lord, Lucullus, had bestowed upon him in the same pretended way of free gift a brace of greyhounds, whose make and fleetness Timon had been heard to admire; these presents the easy-hearted lord accepted without suspicion of the dishonest views of the presenters; and the givers of course were rewarded with some rich return, a diamond or some jewel of twenty times the value of their false and mercenary donation.

Sometimes these creatures would go to work in a more direct way, and with gross and palpable artifice, which yet the credulous Timon was too blind to see, would affect to admire and praise something that Timon possessed, a bargain that he had bought, or some late purchase, which was sure to draw from this yielding and soft-hearted lord a gift of the thing commended, for no service in the world done for it but the easy expense of a little cheap and obvious flattery. In this way Timon but the other day had given to one of these mean lords the bay courser which he himself rode upon, because his lordship had been pleased to say that it was a handsome beast and went well; and Timon knew that no man ever justly praised what he did not wish to possess. For lord Timon weighed his friends' affection with his own, and so fond was he of bestowing, that he could have dealt kingdoms to these supposed friends, and never have been weary.

Not that Timon's wealth all went to enrich these wicked flatterers; he could do noble and praiseworthy actions; and when a servant of his once loved the daughter of a rich Athenian, but could not hope to obtain her by reason that in wealth and rank the maid was so far above him, lord Timon freely bestowed upon his servant three Athenian talents, to make his fortune equal with the dowry which the father of the young maid demanded of him who should be her husband. But for the most part, knaves and parasites had the command of his fortune, false friends whom he did not know to be such, but, because they flocked around his person, he thought they must needs love him; and because they smiled and flattered him, he thought surely that his conduct was approved by all the wise and good. And when he was feasting in the midst of all these flatterers and mock friends, when they were eating him up, and draining his fortunes dry with large draughts of richest wines drunk to his health and prosperity, he could not perceive the difference of a friend from a flatterer, but to his deluded eyes (made proud with the sight) it seemed a precious comfort to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes (though it was his own fortune which paid all the costs), and with joy they would run over at the spectacle of such, as it appeared to him, truly festive and fraternal meeting.

But while he thus outwent the very heart of kindness, and poured out his bounty, as if Plutus, the god of gold, had been but his steward; while thus he proceeded without care or stop, so senseless of expense that he would neither inquire how he could maintain it, nor cease his wild flow of riot; his riches, which were not infinite, must needs melt away before a prodigality which knew no limits. But who should tell him so? his flatterers? they had an interest in shutting his eyes. In vain did his honest steward Flavius try to represent to him his condition, laying his accounts before him, begging of him, praying of him, with an importunity that on any other occasion would have been unmannerly in a servant, beseeching him with tears to look into the state of his affairs. Timon would still put him off, and turn the discourse to something else; for nothing is so deaf to remonstrance as riches turned to poverty, nothing is so unwilling to believe its situation, nothing so incredulous to its own true state, and hard to give credit to a reverse. Often had this good steward, this honest creature, when all the rooms of Timon's great house have been choked up with riotous feeders at his master's cost, when the floors have wept with drunken spilling of wine, and every apartment has blazed with lights and resounded with music and feasting, often had he retired by himself to some solitary spot, and wept faster than the wine ran from the wasteful casks within, to see the mad bounty of his lord, and to think, when the means were gone which brought him praises from all sorts of people, how quickly the breath would be gone of which the praise was made; praises won in feasting would be lost in fasting, and at one cloud of winter-showers these flies would disappear.

But now the time was come that Timon could shut his ears no longer to the representations of this faithful steward. Money must be had; and when he ordered Flavius to sell some of his land for that purpose, Flavius informed him, what he had in vain endeavoured at several times before to make him listen to, that most of his land was already sold or forfeited, and that all he possessed at present was not enough to pay the one half of what he owed. Struck with wonder at this presentation, Timon hastily replied, "My lands extend from Athens to Lacedaemon." "O my good lord," said Flavius, "the world is but a world, and has bounds; were it all yours to give in a breath, how quickly were it gone!"

Timon consoled himself that no villanous bounty had yet come from him, that if he had given his wealth away unwisely, it had not been bestowed to feed his vices, but to cherish his friends; and he bade the kind-hearted steward (who was weeping) to take comfort in the assurance that his master could never lack means, while he had so many noble friends; and this infatuated lord persuaded himself that he had nothing to do but to send and borrow, to use every man's fortune (that had ever tasted his bounty) in this extremity, as freely as his own. Then with a cheerful look, as if confident of the trial, he severally despatched messengers to lord Lucius, to lords Lucullus and Sempronius, men upon whom he had lavished his gifts in past times without measure or moderation; and to Ventidius, whom he had lately released out of prison by paying his debts, and who, by the death of his father, was now come into the possession of an ample fortune, and well enabled to requite Timon's courtesy: to request of Ventidius the return of those five talents which he had paid for him, and of each of those noble lords the loan of fifty talents; nothing doubting that their gratitude would supply his wants (if he needed it) to the amount of five hundred times fifty talents.

Lucullus was the first applied to. This mean lord had been dreaming overnight of a silver bason and cup, and when Timon's servant was announced, his sordid mind suggested to him that this was surely a making out of his dream, and that Timon had sent him such a present: but when he understood the truth of the matter, and that Timon wanted money, the quality of his faint and watery friendship showed itself, for with many protestations he vowed to the servant that he had long foreseen the ruin of his master's affairs, and many a time had he come to dinner to tell him of it, and had come again to supper to try to persuade him to spend less, but he would take no counsel nor warning by his coming: and true it was that he had been a constant attender (as he said) at Timon's feasts, as he had in greater things tasted his bounty; but that he ever came with that intent, or gave good counsel or reproof to Timon, was a base unworthy lie, which he suitably followed up with meanly offering the servant a bribe, to go home to his master and tell him that he had not found Lucullus at home.

As little success had the messenger who was sent to lord Lucius. This lying lord, who was full of Timon's meat, and enriched almost to bursting with Timon's costly presents, when he found the wind changed, and the fountain of so much bounty suddenly stopped, at first could hardly believe it; but on its being confirmed, he affected great regret that he should not have it in his power to serve lord Timon, for unfortunately (which was a base falsehood) he had made a great purchase the day before, which had quite disfurnished him of the means at present, the more beast he, he recalled himself, to put it out of his power to serve so good a friend; and he counted it one of his greatest afflictions that his ability should fail him to pleasure such an honourable gentleman.

Who can call any man friend that dips in the same dish with him? just of this metal is every flatterer. In the recollection of everybody Timon had been a father to this Lucius, had kept up his credit with his purse; Timon's money had gone to pay the wages of his servants, to pay the hire of the labourers who had sweat to build the fine houses which Lucius's pride had made necessary to him: yet, oh! the monster which man makes himself when he proves ungrateful! this Lucius now denied to Timon a sum, which, in respect of what Timon had bestowed on him, was less than charitable men afford to beggars.

Sempronius, and every one of these mercenary lords to whom Timon applied in their turn, returned the same evasive answer or direct denial; even Ventidius, the redeemed and now rich Ventidius, refused to assist him with the loan of those five talents which Timon had not lent but generously given him in his distress.

Now was Timon as much avoided in his poverty as he had been courted and resorted to in his riches. Now the same tongues which had been loudest in his praises, extolling him as bountiful, liberal, and open handed, were not ashamed to censure that very bounty as folly, that liberality as profuseness, though it had shown itself folly in nothing so truly as in the selection of such unworthy creatures as themselves for its objects. Now was Timon's princely mansion forsaken, and become a shunned and hated place, a place for men to pass by, not a place, as formerly, where every passenger must stop and taste of his wine and good cheer; now, instead of being thronged with feasting and tumultuous guests, it was beset with impatient and clamorous creditors, usurers, extortioners, fierce and intolerable in their demands, pleading bonds, interest, mortgages; iron-hearted men that would take no denial nor putting off, that Timon's house was now his jail, which he could not pass, nor go in nor out for them; one demanding his due of fifty talents, another bringing in a bill of five thousand crowns, which if he would tell out his blood by drops, and pay them so, he had not enough in his body to discharge, drop by drop.

In this desperate and irremediable state (as it seemed) of his affairs, the eyes of all men were suddenly surprised at a new and incredible lustre which this setting sun put forth. Once more lord

Timon proclaimed a feast, to which he invited his accustomed guests, lords, ladies, all that was great or fashionable in Athens. Lord Lucius and Lucullus came, Ventidius, Sempronius, and the rest. Who more sorry now than these fawning wretches, when they found (as they thought) that lord Timon's poverty was all pretence, and had been only put on to make trial of their loves, to think that they should not have seen through the artifice at the time, and have had the cheap credit of obliging his lordship? yet who more glad to find the fountain of that noble bounty, which they had thought dried up, still fresh and running? They came dissembling, protesting, expressing deepest sorrow and shame, that when his lordship sent to them, they should have been so unfortunate as to want the present means to oblige so honourable a friend. But Timon begged them not to give such trifles a thought, for he had altogether forgotten it. And these base fawning lords, though they had denied him money in his adversity, yet could not refuse their presence at this new blaze of his returning prosperity. For the swallow follows not summer more willingly than men of these dispositions follow the good fortunes of the great, nor more willingly leaves winter than these shrink from the first appearance of a reverse; such summer birds are men. But now with music and state the banquet of smoking dishes was served up; and when the guests had a little done admiring whence the bankrupt Timon could find means to furnish so costly a feast, some doubting whether the scene which they saw was real, as scarce trusting their own eyes; at a signal given, the dishes were uncovered, and Timon's drift appeared: instead of those varieties and far-fetched dainties which they expected, that Timon's epicurean table in past times had so liberally presented, now appeared under the covers of these dishes a preparation more suitable to Timon's poverty, nothing but a little smoke and lukewarm water, fit feast for this knot of mouth-friends, whose professions were indeed smoke, and their hearts lukewarm and slippery as the water with which Timon welcomed his astonished guests, bidding them, "Uncover, dogs, and lap;" and before they could recover their surprise, sprinkling it in their faces, that they might have enough, and throwing dishes and all after them, who now ran huddling out, lords, ladies, with their caps snatched up in haste, a splendid confusion, Timon pursuing them, still calling them what they were, "smooth smiling parasites, destroyers under the mask of courtesy, affable wolves, meek bears, fools of fortune, feast-friends, time-flies." They, crowding out to avoid him, left the house more willingly than they had entered it; some losing their gowns and caps, and some their jewels in the hurry, all glad to escape out of the presence of such a mad lord, and from the ridicule of his mock banquet.

This was the last feast which ever Timon made, and in it he took farewell of Athens and the society of men; for, after that, he betook himself to the woods, turning his back upon the hated city and upon all mankind, wishing the walls of that detestable city might sink, and the houses fall upon their owners, wishing all plagues which infest humanity, war, outrage, poverty, diseases, might fasten upon its inhabitants, praying the just gods to confound all Athenians, both young and old, high and low; so wishing, he went to the woods, where he said he should find the unkindest beast much kinder than mankind. He stripped himself naked, that he might retain no fashion of a man, and dug a cave to live in, and lived solitary in the manner of a beast, eating the wild roots, and drinking water, flying from the face of his kind, and choosing rather to herd with the wild beasts, as more harmless and friendly than man.

What a change from lord Timon the rich, lord Timon the delight of mankind, to Timon the naked, Timon the man-hater! Where were his flatterers now? Where were his attendants and retinue? Would the bleak air, that boisterous servitor, be his chamberlain, to put his shirt on warm? Would those stiff trees that had outlived the eagle, turn young and airy pages to him, to skip on his errands when he bade them? Would the cool brook, when it was iced with winter, administer to him his warm broths and caudles when sick of an overnight's surfeit? Or would the creatures that lived in those wild woods come and lick his hand and flatter him?

Here on a day, when he was digging for roots, his poor sustenance, his spade struck against something heavy, which proved to be gold, a great heap which some miser had probably buried in a time of alarm, thinking to have come again, and taken it from its prison, but died before the opportunity had arrived, without making any man privy to the concealment; so it lay, doing neither good nor harm, in the bowels of the earth, its mother, as if it had never come from thence, till the accidental striking of Timon's spade against it once more brought it to light.

Here was a mass of treasure which, if Timon had retained his old mind, was enough to have purchased him friends and flatterers again; but Timon was sick of the false world, and the sight of gold was poisonous to his eyes; and he would have restored it to the earth, but that, thinking of the infinite calamities which by means of gold happen to mankind, how the lucre of it causes robberies, oppression, injustice, briberies, violence, and murder, among men, he had a pleasure in imagining (such a rooted hatred did he bear to his species) that out of this heap, which in digging he had discovered, might arise some mischief to plague mankind. And some soldiers passing through the woods near to his cave at that instant, which proved to be a part of the troops of the Athenian captain Alcibiades, who upon some disgust taken against the senators of Athens (the Athenians were ever noted to be a thankless and ungrateful people, giving disgust to their generals and best friends), was marching at the head of the same triumphant army which he had formerly headed in their defence, to war against them; Timon, who liked their business well, bestowed upon their captain the gold to pay his soldiers, requiring no other service from him, than that he should with his conquering army lay Athens level with the ground, and burn, slay, kill all her inhabitants; not sparing the old men for their white beards, for (he said) they were usurers, nor the young children for their seeming innocent smiles, for those (he said) would live, if they grew up, to be traitors; but to steel his eyes and ears against any sights or sounds that might awaken compassion; and not to let the cries of virgins, babes, or mothers, hinder him from making one universal massacre of the city, but to confound them all in his conquest; and when he had conquered, he prayed that the gods would confound him also, the conqueror: so thoroughly did Timon hate Athens, Athenians, and all mankind.

While he lived in this forlorn state, leading a life more brutal than human, he was suddenly surprised one day with the appearance of a man standing in an admiring posture at the door of his cave. It was Flavius, the honest steward, whom love and zealous affection to his master had led to seek him out at his wretched dwelling, and to offer his services; and the first sight of his master, the once noble Timon, in that abject condition, naked as he was born, living in the manner of a beast among beasts, looking like his own sad ruins and a monument of decay, so affected this good servant, that he stood speechless, wrapped up in horror, and confounded. And when he found utterance at last to his words, they were so choked with tears, that Timon had much ado to know him again, or to make out who it was that had come (so contrary to the experience he had had of mankind) to offer him service in extremity. And being in the form and shape of a man, he suspected him for a traitor, and his tears for false; but the good servant by so many tokens confirmed the truth of his fidelity, and made it clear that nothing but love and zealous duty to his once dear master had brought him there, that Timon was forced to confess that the world contained one honest man; yet, being in the shape and form of a man, he could not look upon his man's face without abhorrence, or hear words uttered from his man's lips without loathing; and this singly honest man was forced to depart, because he was a man, and because, with a heart more gentle and compassionate than is usual to man, he bore man's detested form and outward feature.

But greater visitants than a poor steward were about to interrupt the savage quiet of Timon's solitude. For now the day was come when the ungrateful lords of Athens sorely repented the injustice which they had done to the noble Timon. For Alcibiades, like an incensed wild boar, was raging at the walls of their city, and with his hot siege threatened to lay fair Athens in the dust. And now the memory of lord Timon's former prowess and military conduct came fresh into their forgetful minds, for Timon had been their general in past times, and a valiant and expert soldier, who alone of all the Athenians was deemed able to cope with a besieging army such as then threatened them, or to drive back the furious approaches of Alcibiades.

A deputation of the senators was chosen in this emergency to wait upon Timon. To him they come in their extremity, to whom, when he was in extremity, they had shown but small regard; as if they presumed upon his gratitude whom they had disobliged, and had derived a claim to his courtesy from their own most discourteous and unpiteous treatment.

Now they earnestly beseech him, implore him with tears, to return and save that city, from which their ingratitude had so lately driven him; now they offer him riches, power, dignities, satisfaction for past injuries, and public honours, and the public love; their persons, lives, and fortunes, to be at his disposal, if he will but come back and save them. But Timon the naked, Timon the man-hater, was no longer lord Timon, the lord of bounty, the flower of valour, their defence in war, their ornament in peace. If Alcibiades killed his countrymen, Timon cared not. If he sacked fair Athens, and slew her old men and her infants, Timon would rejoice. So he told them; and that there was not a knife in the unruly camp which he did not prize above the reverendest throat in Athens.

This was all the answer he vouchsafed to the weeping disappointed senators; only at parting he bade them commend him to his countrymen, and tell them, that to ease them of their griefs and anxieties, and to prevent the consequences of fierce Alcibiades' wrath, there was yet a way left, which he would teach them, for he had yet so much affection left for his dear countrymen as to be willing to do them a kindness before his death. These words a little revived the senators, who hoped that his kindness for their city was returning. Then Timon told them that he had a tree, which grew near his cave, which he should shortly have occasion to cut down, and he invited all his friends in Athens, high or low, of what degree soever, who wished to shun affliction, to come and take a taste of his tree before he cut it down; meaning, that they might come and hang themselves on it, and escape affliction that way.

And this was the last courtesy, of all his noble bounties, which Timon showed to mankind, and this the last sight of him which his countrymen had: for not many days after, a poor soldier, passing by the sea-beach, which was at a little distance from the woods which Timon frequented, found a tomb on the verge of the sea, with an inscription upon it, purporting that it was the grave of Timon the man-hater, who "While he lived, did hate all living men, and dying wished a plague might consume all caitiffs left!"

Whether he finished his life by violence, or whether mere distaste of life and the loathing he had for mankind brought Timon to his conclusion, was not clear, yet all men admired the fitness of his epitaph, and the consistency of his end; dying, as he had lived, a hater of mankind: and some there were who fancied a conceit in the very choice which he had made of the sea-beach for his place of burial, where the vast sea might weep for ever upon his grave, as in contempt of the transient and shallow tears of hypocritical and deceitful mankind.

ROMEO AND JULIET

THE two chief families in Verona were the rich Capulets and the Montagues. There had been an old quarrel between these families, which was grown to such a height, and so deadly was the enmity between them, that it extended to the remotest kindred, to the followers and retainers of both sides, insomuch that a servant of the house of Montague could not meet a servant of the house of Capulet, nor a Capulet encounter with a Montague by chance, but fierce words and sometimes bloodshed ensued; and frequent were the brawls from such accidental meetings, which disturbed the happy quiet of Verona's streets.

Old lord Capulet made a great supper, to which many fair ladies and many noble guests were invited. All the admired beauties of Verona were present, and all comers were made welcome if they were not of the house of Montague. At this feast of Capulets, Rosaline, beloved of Romeo, son to the old lord Montague, was present; and though it was dangerous for a Montague to be seen in this assembly, yet Benvolio, a friend of Romeo, persuaded the young lord to go to this assembly in the disguise of a mask, that he might see his Rosaline, and seeing her, compare her with some choice beauties of Verona, who (he said) would make him think his swan a crow. Romeo had small faith in Benvolio's words; nevertheless, for the love of Rosaline, he was persuaded to go. For Romeo was a sincere and passionate lover, and one that lost his sleep for love, and fled society to be alone, thinking on Rosaline, who disdained him, and never requited his love, with the least show of courtesy or affection; and Benvolio wished to cure his friend of this love by showing him diversity of ladies and company. To this feast of Capulets then young Romeo with Benvolio and their friend Mercutio went masked. Old Capulet bid them welcome, and told them that ladies who had their toes unplagued with corns would dance with them. And the old man was light hearted and merry, and said that he had worn a mask when he was young, and could have told a whispering tale in a fair lady's ear. And they fell to dancing, and Romeo was suddenly struck with the exceeding beauty of a lady who danced there, who seemed to him to teach the torches to burn bright, and her beauty to show by night like a rich jewel worn by a black-amoor; beauty too rich for use, too dear for earth! like a snowy dove trooping with crows (he said), so richly did her beauty and perfections shine above the ladies her companions. While he uttered these praises, he was overheard by Tybalt, a nephew of lord Capulet, who knew him by his voice to be Romeo. And this Tybalt, being of a fiery and passionate temper, could not endure that a Montague should come under cover of a mask, to fleer and scorn (as he said) at their solemnities. And he stormed and raged exceedingly, and would have struck young Romeo dead. But his uncle, the old lord Capulet, would not suffer him to do any injury at that time, both out of respect to his guests, and because Romeo had borne himself like a gentleman, and all tongues in Verona bragged of him to be a virtuous and well-governed youth. Tybalt, forced to be patient against his will, restrained himself, but swore that this vile Montague should at another time dearly pay for his intrusion.

The dancing being done, Romeo watched the place where the lady stood; and under favour of his masking habit, which might seem to excuse in part the liberty, he presumed in the gentlest manner to take her by the hand, calling it a shrine, which if he profaned by touching it, he was a blushing pilgrim, and would kiss it for atonement. "Good pilgrim," answered the lady, "your devotion shows by far too mannerly and too courtly: saints have hands, which pilgrims may touch, but kiss not."—"Have not saints lips, and pilgrims too?" said Romeo. "Ay," said the lady, "lips which they must use in prayer."—"O then, my dear saint," said Romeo, "hear my prayer, and grant it, lest I despair." In such like allusions and loving conceits they were engaged, when the lady was called away to her mother. And Romeo inquiring who her mother was, discovered that the lady whose peerless beauty he was so much struck with, was young Juliet, daughter and heir to the lord Capulet, the great enemy of the Montagues; and that he had unknowingly engaged his heart to his foe. This troubled him, but it could not dissuade him from loving. As little rest had Juliet, when she found that the gentleman that she had been talking with was Romeo and a Montague, for she had been suddenly smit with the same hasty and inconsiderate passion for Romeo, which he had conceived for her; and a prodigious birth of love it seemed to her, that she must love her enemy, and that her affections should settle there, where family considerations should induce her chiefly to hate.

It being midnight, Romeo with his companions departed; but they soon missed him, for, unable to stay away from the house where he had left his heart, he leaped the wall of an orchard which was at the back of Juliet's house. Here he had not been long, ruminating on his new love, when Juliet appeared above at a window, through which her exceeding beauty seemed to break like the light of the sun in the east; and the moon, which shone in the orchard with a faint light, appeared to Romeo as if sick and pale with grief at the superior lustre of this new sun. And she, leaning her cheek upon her hand, he passionately wished himself a glove upon that hand, that he might touch her cheek. She all this while thinking herself alone, fetched a deep sigh, and exclaimed, "Ah me!" Romeo, enraptured to hear her speak, said softly, and unheard by her, "O speak again, bright angel, for such you appear, being over my head, like a winged messenger from heaven whom mortals fall back to gaze upon." She, unconscious of being overheard, and full of the new passion which that night's adventure had given birth to, called upon her lover by name (whom she supposed absent): "O Romeo, Romeo!" said she, "wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father, and refuse thy name, for my sake; or if thou wilt not, be but my sworn love, and I no longer will be a Capulet." Romeo, having this encouragement, would fain have spoken, but he was desirous of hearing more; and the lady continued her passionate discourse with herself (as she thought), still chiding Romeo for being Romeo and a Montague, and wishing him some other name, or that he would put away that hated name, and for that name which was no part of himself, he should take all herself. At this loving word Romeo could no longer refrain, but taking up the dialogue as if her words had been addressed to him personally, and not merely in fancy, he bade her call him Love, or by whatever other name she pleased, for he was no longer Romeo, if that name was displeasing to her. Juliet, alarmed to hear a man's voice in the garden, did not at first know who it was, that by favour of the night and darkness had thus stumbled upon the discovery of her secret; but when he spoke again, though her ears had not yet drunk a hundred words of that tongue's uttering, yet so nice is a lover's hearing, that she immediately knew him to be young Romeo, and she expostulated with him on the danger to which he had exposed himself by climbing the orchard walls, for if any of her kinsmen should find him there, it would be death to him, being a Montague. "Alack," said Romeo, "there is more peril in your eye, than in twenty of their swords. Do you but look kind upon me, lady, and I am proof against their enmity. Better my life should be ended by their hate, than that hated life should be prolonged, to live without your love." —"How came you into this place," said Juliet, "and by whose direction?"—"Love directed me," answered Romeo: "I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far apart from me, as that vast shore which is washed with the farthest sea, I should venture for such merchandise." A crimson blush came over Juliet's face, yet unseen by Romeo by reason of the night, when she reflected upon the discovery which she had made, yet not meaning to make it, of her love to Romeo. She would fain have recalled her words, but that was impossible: fain would she have stood upon form, and have kept her lover at a distance, as the custom of discreet ladies is, to frown and be perverse, and give their suitors harsh denials at first; to stand off, and affect a coyness or indifference, where they most love, that their lovers may not think them too lightly or too easily won; for the difficulty of attainment increases the value of the object. But there was no room in her case for denials, or puttings off, or any of the customary arts of delay and protracted courtship. Romeo had heard from her own tongue, when she did not dream that he was near her, a confession of her love. So with an honest frankness, which the novelty of her situation excused, she confirmed the truth of what he had before heard, and addressing him by the name of *fair Montague* (love can sweeten a sour name) she begged him not to impute her easy yielding to levity or an unworthy mind, but that he must lay the fault of it (if it were a fault) upon the accident of the night which had so strangely discovered her thoughts. And she added, that though her behaviour to him might not be sufficiently prudent, measured by the custom of her sex, yet that she would prove more true than many whose prudence was dissembling, and their modesty artificial cunning.

Romeo was beginning to call the heavens to witness, that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to impute a shadow of dishonour to such an honoured lady, when she stopped him, begging him not to swear; for although she joyed in him, yet she had no joy of that night's contract: it was too rash, too unadvised, too sudden. But he being urgent with her to exchange a vow of love with him that night, she said that she already had given him hers before he requested it; meaning, when he overheard her confession; but she would retract what she then bestowed, for the pleasure of giving it again, for her bounty was as infinite as the sea, and her love as deep. From this loving conference she was called away by her nurse, who slept with her, and thought it time for her to be in bed, for it was near to daybreak; but hastily returning, she said three or four words more to Romeo, the purport of which was, that if his love was indeed honourable, and his purpose marriage, she would send a messenger to him to-morrow, to appoint a time for their marriage, when she would lay all her fortunes at his feet, and follow him as her lord through the world. While they were settling this point, Juliet was repeatedly called for by her nurse, and went in and returned, and went and returned again, for she seemed as jealous of Romeo going from her, as a young girl of her bird, which she will let hop a little from her hand, and pluck it back with a silken thread; and Romeo was as loath to part as she; for the sweetest music to lovers is the sound of each other's tongues at night. But at last they parted, wishing mutually sweet sleep and rest for that night.

The day was breaking when they parted, and Romeo, who was too full of thoughts of his mistress and that blessed meeting to allow him to sleep, instead of going home, bent his course to a monastery hard by, to find friar Lawrence. The good friar was already up at his devotions, but seeing young Romeo abroad so early, he conjectured rightly that he had not been abed that night, but that some distemper of youthful affection had kept him waking. He was right in imputing the cause of Romeo's wakefulness to love, but he made a wrong guess at the object, for he thought that his love for Rosaline had kept him waking. But when Romeo revealed his new passion for Juliet, and requested the assistance of the friar to marry them that day, the holy man lifted up his eyes and hands in a sort of wonder at the sudden change in Romeo's affections, for he had been privy to all Romeo's love for Rosaline, and his many complaints of her disdain: and he said, that young men's love lay not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes. But Romeo replying, that he himself had often chidden him for doting on Rosaline, who could not love him again, whereas Juliet both loved and was beloved by him, the friar assented in some measure to his reasons; and thinking that a matrimonial alliance between young Juliet and Romeo might happily be the means of making up the long breach between the Capulets and the Montagues; which no one more lamented than this good friar, who was a friend to both the families and had often interposed his mediation to make up the quarrel without effect; partly moved by policy, and partly by his fondness for young Romeo, to whom he could deny nothing, the old man consented to join their hands in marriage.

Now was Romeo blessed indeed, and Juliet, who knew his intent from a messenger which she had despatched according to promise, did not fail to be early at the cell of friar Lawrence, where their hands were joined in holy marriage; the good friar praying the heavens to smile upon that act, and in the union of this young Montague and young Capulet to bury the old strife and long dissensions of their families.

The ceremony being over, Juliet hastened home, where she stayed impatient for the coming of night, at which time Romeo promised to come and meet her in the orchard, where they had met the night before; and the time between seemed as tedious to her, as the night before some great festival seems to an impatient child, that has got new finery which it may not put on till the morning.

That same day, about noon, Romeo's friends, Benvolio and Mercutio, walking through the streets of Verona, were met by a party of the Capulets with the impetuous Tybalt at their head. This was the same angry Tybalt who would have fought with Romeo at old lord Capulet's feast. He, seeing Mercutio, accused him bluntly of associating with Romeo, a Montague. Mercutio, who had as much fire and youthful blood in him as Tybalt, replied to this accusation with some sharpness; and in spite of all Benvolio could say to moderate their wrath, a quarrel was beginning, when Romeo himself passing that way, the fierce Tybalt turned from Mercutio to Romeo, and gave him the disgraceful appellation of villain. Romeo wished to avoid a quarrel with Tybalt above all men, because he was the kinsman of Juliet, and much beloved by her; besides, this young Montague had never thoroughly entered into the family quarrel, being by nature wise and gentle, and the name of a Capulet, which was his dear lady's name, was now rather a charm to allay resentment, than a watchword to excite fury. So he tried to reason with Tybalt, whom he saluted mildly by the name of *good Capulet*, as if he, though a Montague, had some secret pleasure in uttering that name: but Tybalt, who hated all Montagues as he hated hell, would hear no reason, but drew his weapon; and Mercutio, who knew not of Romeo's secret motive for desiring peace with Tybalt, but looked upon his present forbearance as a sort of calm dishonourable submission, with many disdainful words provoked Tybalt to the prosecution of his first quarrel with him; and Tybalt and Mercutio fought, till Mercutio fell, receiving his death's wound while Romeo and Benvolio were vainly endeavouring to part the combatants. Mercutio being dead, Romeo kept his temper no longer, but returned the scornful appellation of villain which Tybalt had given him; and they fought till Tybalt was slain by Romeo. This deadly broil falling out in the midst of Verona at noonday, the news of it quickly brought a crowd of citizens to the spot, and among them the old lords Capulet and Montague, with their wives; and soon after arrived the prince himself, who being related to Mercutio, whom Tybalt had slain, and having had the peace of his government often disturbed by these brawls of Montagues and Capulets, came determined to put the law in strictest force against those who should be found to be offenders. Benvolio, who had been eyewitness to the fray, was commanded by the prince to relate the origin of it; which he did, keeping as near the truth as he could without injury to Romeo, softening and excusing the part which his friends took in it. Lady Capulet, whose extreme grief for the loss of her kinsman Tybalt made her keep no bounds in her revenge, exhorted the prince to do strict justice upon his murderer, and to pay no attention to Benvolio's representation, who, being Romeo's friend and a Montague, spoke partially. Thus she pleaded against her new son-in-law, but she knew not yet that he was her son-in-law and Juliet's husband. On the other hand was to be seen Lady Montague pleading for her child's life, and arguing with some justice that Romeo had done nothing worthy of punishment in taking the life of Tybalt, which was already forfeited to the law by his having slain Mercutio. The prince, unmoved by the passionate exclamations of these women, on a careful examination of the facts, pronounced his sentence, and by that sentence Romeo was banished from Verona.

Heavy news to young Juliet, who had been but a few hours a bride, and now by this decree seemed everlastingly divorced! When the tidings reached her, she at first gave way to rage against Romeo, who had slain her dear cousin: she called him a beautiful tyrant, a fiend angelical, a ravenous dove, a lamb with a wolf's nature, a serpent-heart hid with a flowering face, and other like contradictory names, which denoted the struggles in her mind between her love and her resentment: but in the end love got the mastery, and the tears which she shed for grief that Romeo had slain her cousin, turned to drops of joy that her husband lived whom Tybalt would have slain. Then came fresh tears, and they were altogether of grief for Romeo's banishment. That word was more terrible to her than the death of many Tybalts.

Romeo, after the fray, had taken refuge in friar Lawrence's cell, where he was first made acquainted with the prince's sentence, which seemed to him far more terrible than death. To him it appeared there was no world out of Verona's walls, no living out of the sight of Juliet. Heaven was there where Juliet lived, and all beyond was purgatory, torture, hell. The good friar would have applied the consolation of philosophy to his griefs: but this frantic young man would hear of none, but like a madman he tore his hair, and threw himself all along upon the ground, as he said, to take the measure of his grave. From this unseemly state he was roused by a message from his dear lady, which a little revived him; and then the friar took the advantage to expostulate with him on the unmanly weakness which he had shown. He had slain Tybalt, but would he also slay himself, slay his dear lady, who lived but in his life? The noble form of man, he said, was but a shape of wax, when it wanted the courage which should keep it firm. The law had been lenient to him, that instead of death, which he had incurred, had pronounced by the prince's mouth only banishment. He had slain Tybalt, but Tybalt would have slain him: there was a sort of happiness in that. Juliet was alive, and (beyond all hope) had become his dear wife; therein he was most happy. All these blessings, as the friar made them out to be, did Romeo put from him like a sullen misbehaved wench. And the friar bade him beware, for such as despaired (he said) died miserable. Then when Romeo was a little calmed, he counselled him that he should go that night and secretly take his leave of Juliet, and thence proceed straightways to Mantua, at which place he should sojourn, till the friar found fit occasion to publish his marriage, which might be a joyful means of reconciling their families; and then he did not doubt but the prince would be moved to pardon him, and he would return with twenty times more joy than he went forth with grief. Romeo was convinced by these wise counsels of the friar, and took his leave to go and seek his lady, proposing to stay with her that night, and by daybreak pursue his journey alone to Mantua; to which place the good friar promised to send him letters from time to time, acquainting him with the state of affairs at home.

That night Romeo passed with his dear wife, gaining secret admission to her chamber, from the orchard in which he had heard her confession of love the night before. That had been a night of unmixed joy and rapture; but the pleasures of this night, and the delight which these lovers took in each other's society, were sadly allayed with the prospect of parting, and the fatal adventures of the past day. The unwelcome daybreak seemed to come too soon, and when Juliet heard the morning song of the lark, she would have persuaded herself that it was the nightingale, which sings by night; but it was too truly the lark which sang, and a discordant and unpleasing note it seemed to her; and the streaks of day in the east too certainly pointed out that it was time for these lovers to part. Romeo took his leave of his dear wife with a heavy heart, promising to write to her from Mantua every hour in the day; and when he had descended from her chamber-window, as he stood below her on the ground, in that sad foreboding state of mind in which she was, he appeared to her eyes as one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Romeo's mind misgave him in like manner: but now he was forced hastily to depart, for it was death for him to be found within the walls of Verona after daybreak.

This was but the beginning of the tragedy of this pair of star-crossed lovers. Romeo had not been gone many days, before the old lord Capulet proposed a match for Juliet. The husband he had chosen for her, not dreaming that she was married already, was count Paris, a gallant, young, and noble gentleman, no unworthy suitor to the young Juliet, if she had never seen Romeo.

The terrified Juliet was in a sad perplexity at her father's offer. She pleaded her youth unsuitable to marriage, the recent death of Tybalt, which had left her spirits too weak to meet a husband with any face of joy, and how indecorous it would show for the family of the Capulets to be celebrating a nuptial feast, when his funeral solemnities were hardly over: she pleaded every reason against the match, but the true one, namely, that she was married already. But lord Capulet was deaf to all her excuses, and in a peremptory manner ordered her to get ready, for by the following Thursday she should be married to Paris: and having found her a husband, rich, young, and noble, such as the proudest maid in Verona might joyfully accept, he could not bear that out of an affected coyness, as he construed her denial, she should oppose obstacles to her own good fortune.

In this extremity Juliet applied to the friendly friar, always her counsellor in distress, and he asking her if she had resolution to undertake a desperate remedy, and she answering that she would go into the grave alive rather than marry Paris, her own dear husband living; he directed her to go home, and appear merry, and give her consent to marry Paris, according to her father's desire, and on the next night, which was the night before the marriage, to drink off the contents of a phial which he then gave her, the effect of which would be that for two-and-forty hours after drinking it she should appear cold and lifeless; and when the bridegroom came to fetch her in the morning, he would find her to appearance dead;

that then she would be borne, as the manner in that country was, uncovered on a bier, to be buried in the family vault; that if she could put off womanish fear, and consent to this terrible trial, in forty-two hours after swallowing the liquid (such was its certain operation) she would be sure to awake, as from a dream; and before she should awake, he would let her husband know their drift, and he should come in the night, and bear her thence to Mantua. Love, and the dread of marrying Paris, gave young Juliet strength to undertake this horrible adventure; and she took the phial of the friar, promising to observe his directions.

Going from the monastery, she met the young count Paris, and modestly dissembling, promised to become his bride. This was joyful news to the lord Capulet and his wife. It seemed to put youth into the old man; and Juliet, who had displeased him exceedingly, by her refusal of the count, was his darling again, now she promised to be obedient. All things in the house were in a bustle against the approaching nuptials. No cost was spared to prepare such festival rejoicings as Verona had never before witnessed.

On the Wednesday night Juliet drank off the potion. She had many misgivings lest the friar, to avoid the blame which might be imputed to him for marrying her to Romeo, had given her poison; but then he was always known for a holy man: then lest she should awake before the time that Romeo was to come for her; whether the terror of the place, a vault full of dead Capulets' bones, and where Tybalt, all bloody, lay festering in his shroud, would not be enough to drive her distracted: again she thought of all the stories she had heard of spirits haunting the places where their bodies were bestowed. But then her love for Romeo, and her aversion for Paris returned, and she desperately swallowed the draught, and became insensible.

When young Paris came early in the morning with music to awaken his bride, instead of a living Juliet, her chamber presented the dreary spectacle of a lifeless corse. What death to his hopes! What confusion then reigned through the whole house! Poor

Paris lamenting his bride, whom most detestable death had beguiled him of, had divorced from him even before their hands were joined. But still more piteous it was to hear the mournings of the old lord and lady Capulet, who having but this one, one poor loving child to rejoice and solace in, cruel death had snatched her from their sight, just as these careful parents were on the point of seeing her advanced (as they thought) by a promising and advantageous match. Now all things that were ordained for the festival were turned from their properties to do the office of a black funeral. The wedding cheer served for a sad burial feast, the bridal hymns were changed for sullen dirges, the sprightly instruments to melancholy bells, and the flowers that should have been strewed in the bride's path, now served but to strew her corse. Now, instead of a priest to marry her, a priest was needed to bury her; and she was borne to church indeed, not to augment the cheerful hopes of the living, but to swell the dreary numbers of the dead.

Bad news, which always travels faster than good, now brought the dismal story of his Juliet's death to Romeo, at Mantua, before the messenger could arrive, who was sent from friar Lawrence to apprise him that these were mock funerals only, and but the shadow and representation of death, and that his dear lady lay in the tomb but for a short while, expecting when Romeo would come to release her from that dreary mansion. Just before, Romeo had been unusually joyful and light-hearted. He had dreamed in the night that he was dead (a strange dream, that gave a dead man leave to think), and that his lady came and found him dead, and breathed such life with kisses in his lips, that he revived, and was an emperor! And now that a messenger came from Verona, he thought surely it was to confirm some good news which his dreams had presaged. But when the contrary to this flattering vision appeared, and that it was his lady who was dead in truth, whom he could not revive by any kisses, he ordered horses to be got ready, for he determined that night to visit Verona, and to see his lady in her tomb. And as mischief is swift to enter into the thoughts of desperate men, he called to mind a poor apothecary, whose shop in Mantua he had lately passed, and from the beggarly appearance of the man, who seemed famished, and the wretched show in his show of empty boxes ranged on dirty shelves, and other tokens of extreme wretchedness, he had said at the time (perhaps having some misgivings that his own disastrous life might haply meet with a conclusion so desperate), "If a man were to need poison, which by the law of Mantua it is death to sell, here lives a poor wretch who would sell it him." These words of his now came into his mind, and he sought out the apothecary, who after some pretended scruples, Romeo offering him gold, which his poverty could not resist, sold him a poison, which, if he swallowed, he told him, if he had the strength of twenty men, would quickly despatch him.

With this poison he set out for Verona, to have a sight of his dear lady in her tomb, meaning, when he had satisfied his sight, to swallow the poison, and be buried by her side. He reached Verona at midnight, and found the churchyard, in the midst of which was situated the ancient tomb of the Capulets. He had provided a light, and a spade, and wrenching iron, and was proceeding to break open the monument, when he was interrupted by a voice, which by the name of *vile Montague,* bade him desist from his unlawful business. It was the young count Paris, who had come to the tomb of Juliet at that unseasonable time of night, to strew flowers and to weep over the grave of her that should have been his bride. He knew not what an interest Romeo had in the dead, but knowing him to be a Montague, and (as he supposed) a sworn foe to all the Capulets, he judged that he was come by night to do some villanous shame to the dead bodies; therefore in an angry tone he bade him desist; and as a criminal, condemned by the laws of Verona to die if he were found within the walls of the city, he would have apprehended him. Romeo urged Paris to leave him, and warned him by the fate of Tybalt, who lay buried there, not to provoke his anger, or draw down another sin upon his head, by forcing him to kill him. But the count in scorn refused his warning, and laid hands on him as a felon, which Romeo resisting, they fought, and Paris fell. When Romeo, by the help of a light, came to see who it was that he had slain, that it was Paris, who (he learned in his way from Mantua) should have married Juliet, he took the dead youth by the hand, as one whom misfortune had made a companion, and said that he would bury him in a triumphal grave, meaning in Juliet's grave, which he now opened: and there lay his lady, as one whom death had no power upon to change a feature or complexion, in her matchless beauty; or as if Death were amorous, and the lean abhorred monster kept her there for his delight; for she lay yet fresh and blooming, as she had fallen to sleep when she swallowed that benumbing potion; and near her lay Tybalt in his bloody shroud, whom Romeo seeing, begged pardon of his lifeless corse, and for Juliet's sake called him *cousin,* and said that he was about to do him a favour by putting his enemy to death. Here Romeo took his last leave of his lady's lips, kissing them; and here he shook the burden of his cross stars from his weary body, swallowing that poison which the apothecary had sold him, whose operation was fatal and real, not like that dissembling potion which Juliet had swallowed, the effect of which was now nearly expiring, and she about to awake to complain that Romeo had not kept his time, or that he had come too soon.

For now the hour was arrived at which the friar had promised that she should awake; and he, having learned that his letters which he had sent to Mantua, by some unlucky detention of the messenger, had never reached Romeo, came himself, provided with a pickaxe and lantern, to deliver the lady from her confinement; but he was surprised to find a light already burning in the Capulets' monument, and to see swords and blood near it, and Romeo and Paris lying breathless by the monument.

Before he could entertain a conjecture, to imagine how these fatal accidents had fallen out, Juliet awoke out of her trance, and seeing the friar near her, she remembered the place where she was, and the occasion of her being there, and asked for Romeo, but the friar, hearing a noise, bade her come out of that place of death, and of unnatural sleep, for a greater power than they could contradict had thwarted their intents; and being frightened by the noise of people coming, he fled: but when Juliet saw the cup closed in her true love's hands, she guessed that poison had been the cause of his end, and she would have swallowed the dregs if any had been left, and she kissed his still warm lips to try if any poison yet did hang upon them; then hearing a nearer noise of people coming, she quickly unsheathed a dagger which she wore, and stabbing herself, died by her true Romeo's side.

The watch by this time had come up to the place. A page belonging to count Paris, who had witnessed the fight between his master and Romeo, had given the alarm, which had spread among the citizens, who went up and down the streets of Verona confusedly exclaiming, A Paris! a Romeo! a Juliet! as the rumour had imperfectly reached them, till the uproar brought lord Montague and lord Capulet out of their beds, with the prince, to inquire into the causes of the disturbance. The friar had been apprehended by some of the watch, coming from the churchyard, trembling, sighing, and weeping, in a suspicious manner. A great multitude being assembled at the Capulets' monument, the friar was demanded by the prince to deliver what he knew of these strange and disastrous accidents.

And there, in the presence of the old lords Montague and Capulet, he faithfully related the story of their children's fatal love, the part he took in promoting their marriage, in the hope in that union to end the long quarrels between their families: how Romeo, there dead, was husband to Juliet; and Juliet, there dead, was Romeo's faithful wife; how before he could find a fit opportunity to divulge their marriage, another match was projected for Juliet, who, to avoid the crime of a second marriage, swallowed the sleeping draught (as he advised), and all thought her dead; how meantime he wrote to Romeo, to come and take her thence when the force of the potion should cease, and by what unfortunate miscarriage of the messenger the letters never reached Romeo: further than this the friar could not follow the story, nor knew more than that coming himself, to deliver Juliet from that place of death, he found the count Paris and Romeo slain. The remainder of the transactions was supplied by the narration of the page who had seen Paris and Romeo fight, and by the servant who came with Romeo from Verona, to whom this faithful lover had given letters to be delivered to his father in the event of his death, which made good the friar's words, confessing his marriage with Juliet, imploring the forgiveness of his parents, acknowledging the buying of the poison of the poor apothecary, and his intent in coming to the monument, to die, and lie with Juliet. All these circumstances agreed together to clear the friar from any hand he could be supposed to have in these complicated slaughters, further than as the unintended consequences of his own well meant, yet too artificial and subtle contrivances.

And the prince, turning to these old lords, Montague and Capulet, rebuked them for their brutal and irrational enmities, and showed them what a scourge Heaven had laid upon such offences, that it had found means even through the love of their children to punish their unnatural hate. And these old rivals, no longer enemies, agreed to bury their long strife in their children's graves; and lord Capulet requested lord Montague to give him his hand, calling him by the name of brother, as if in acknowledgment of the union of their families, by the marriage of the young Capulet and Montague; and saying that lord Montague's hand (in token of reconcilement) was all he demanded for his daughter's jointure: but lord Montague said he would give him more, for he would raise her a statue of pure gold, that while Verona kept its name, no figure should be so esteemed for its richness and workmanship as that of the true and faithful Juliet. And lord Capulet in return said that he would raise another statue to Romeo. So did these poor old lords, when it was too late, strive to outgo each other in mutual courtesies: while so deadly had been their rage and enmity in past times, that nothing but the fearful overthrow of their children (poor sacrifices to their quarrels and dissensions) could remove the rooted hates and jealousies of the noble families.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, becoming a widow by the sudden death of King Hamlet, in less than two months after his death married his brother Claudius, which was noted by all people at the time for a strange act of indiscretion, or unfeelingness, or worse: for this Claudius did no ways resemble her late husband in the qualities of his person or his mind, but was as contemptible in outward appearance, as he was base and unworthy in disposition; and suspicions did not fail to arise in the minds of some, that he had privately made away with his brother, the late king, with the view of marrying his widow, and ascending the throne of Denmark, to the exclusion of young Hamlet, the son of the buried king, and lawful successor to the throne.

But upon no one did this unadvised action of the queen make such impression as upon this young prince, who loved and venerated the memory of his dead father almost to idolatry, and being of a nice sense of honour, and a most exquisite practiser of propriety himself, did sorely take to heart this unworthy conduct of his mother Gertrude: insomuch that, between grief for his father's death and shame for his mother's marriage, this young prince was overclouded with a deep melancholy, and lost all his mirth and all his good looks; all his customary pleasure in books forsook him, his princely exercises and sports, proper to his youth, were no longer acceptable; he grew weary of the world, which seemed to him an unweeded garden, where all the wholesome flowers were choked up, and nothing but weeds could thrive. Not that the prospect of exclusion from the throne, his lawful inheritance, weighed so much upon his spirits, though that to a young and high-minded prince was a bitter wound and a sore indignity; but what so galled him, and took away all his cheerful spirits, was, that his mother had shown herself so forgetful to his father's memory: and such a father! who had been to her so loving and so gentle a husband! and then she always appeared as loving and obedient a wife to him, and would hang upon him as if her affection grew to him: and now within two months, or as it seemed to young Hamlet, less than two months, she had married again, married his uncle, her dear husband's brother, in itself a highly improper and unlawful marriage, from the nearness of relationship, but made much more so by the indecent haste with which it was concluded, and the unkingly character of the man whom she had chosen to be the partner of her throne and bed. This it was, which more than the loss of ten kingdoms, dashed the spirits and brought a cloud over the mind of this honourable young prince.

In vain was all that his mother Gertrude or the king could do to contrive to divert him; he still appeared in court in a suit of deep black, as mourning for the king his father's death, which mode of dress he had never laid aside, not even in compliment to his mother upon the day she was married, nor could he be brought to join in any of the festivities or rejoicings of that (as appeared to him) disgraceful day.

What mostly troubled him was an uncertainty about the manner of his father's death. It was given out by Claudius that a serpent had stung him; but young Hamlet had shrewd suspicions that Claudius himself was the serpent; in plain English, that he had murdered him for his crown, and that the serpent who stung his father did now sit on the throne.

How far he was right in this conjecture, and what he ought to think of his mother, how far she was privy to this murder, and whether by her consent or knowledge, or without, it came to pass, were the doubts which continually harassed and distracted him.

A rumour had reached the ear of young Hamlet, that an apparition, exactly resembling the dead king his father, had been seen by the soldiers upon watch, on the platform before the palace at midnight, for two or three nights successively. The figure came constantly clad in the same suit of armour, from head to foot, which the dead king was known to have worn: and they who saw it (Hamlet's bosom friend Horatio was one) agreed in their testimony as to the time and manner of its appearance: that it came just as the clock struck twelve; that it looked pale, with a face more of sorrow than of anger; that its beard was grisly, and the colour a *sable silvered,* as they had seen it in his lifetime: that it made no answer when they spoke to it; yet once they thought it lifted up its head, and addressed itself to motion, as if it were about to speak; but in that moment the morning cock crew, and it shrunk in haste away, and vanished out of their sight.

The young prince, strangely amazed at their relation, which was too consistent and agreeing with itself to disbelieve, concluded that it was his father's ghost which they had seen, and determined to take his watch with the soldiers that night, that he might have a chance of seeing it; for he reasoned with himself, that such an appearance did not come for nothing, but that the ghost had something to impart, and though it had been silent hitherto, yet it would speak to him. And he waited with impatience for the coming of night.

When night came he took his stand with Horatio, and Marcellus, one of the guard, upon the platform, where this apparition was accustomed to walk: and it being a cold night, and the air unusually raw and nipping, Hamlet and Horatio and their companion fell into some talk about the coldness of the night, which was suddenly broken off by Horatio announcing that the ghost was coming.

At the sight of his father's spirit, Hamlet was struck with a sudden surprise and fear. He at first called upon the angels and heavenly ministers to defend them, for he knew not whether it were a good spirit or bad; whether it came for good or evil: but he gradually assumed more courage; and his father (as it seemed to him) looked upon him so piteously, and as it were desiring to have conversation with him, and did in all respects appear so like himself as he was when he lived, that Hamlet could not help addressing him: he called him by his name, Hamlet, King, Father! and conjured him that he would tell the reason why he had left his grave, where they had seen him quietly bestowed, to come again and visit the earth and the moonlight: and besought him that he would let them know if there was anything which they could do to give peace to his spirit. And the ghost beckoned to Hamlet, that he should go with him to some more removed place, where they might be alone; and Horatio and Marcellus would have dissuaded the young prince from following it, for they feared lest it should be some evil spirit, who would tempt him to the neighbouring sea, or to the top of some dreadful cliff, and there put on some horrible shape which might deprive the prince of his reason. But their counsels and entreaties could not alter Hamlet's determination, who cared too little about life to fear the losing of it; and as to his soul, he said, what could the spirit do to that, being a thing immortal as itself? And he felt as hardy as a lion, and bursting from them, who did all they could to hold him, he followed whithersoever the spirit led him.

And when they were alone together, the spirit broke silence, and told him that he was the ghost of Hamlet, his father, who had been cruelly murdered, and he told the manner of it; that it was done by his own brother Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, as Hamlet had already but too much suspected, for the hope of succeeding to his bed and crown. That as he was sleeping in his garden, his custom always in the afternoon, his treasonous brother stole upon him in his sleep, and poured the juice of poisonous henbane into his ears, which has such an antipathy to the life of man, that swift as quicksilver it courses through all the veins of the body, baking up the blood, and spreading a crustlike leprosy all over the skin: thus sleeping, by a brother's hand he was cut off at once from his crown, his queen, and his life: and he adjured Hamlet, if he did ever his dear father love, that he would revenge his foul murder. And the ghost lamented to his son, that his mother should so fall off from virtue, as to prove false to the wedded love of her first husband, and to marry his murderer; but he cautioned Hamlet, howsoever he proceeded in his revenge against his wicked uncle, by no means to act any violence against the person of his mother, but to leave her to heaven, and to the stings and thorns of conscience. And Hamlet promised to observe the ghost's direction in all things, and the ghost vanished.

And when Hamlet was left alone, he took up a solemn resolution, that all he had in his memory, all that he had ever learned by books or observation, should be instantly forgotten by him, and nothing live in his brain but the memory of what the ghost had told him, and enjoined him to do. And Hamlet related the particulars of the conversation which had passed to none but his dear friend Horatio; and he enjoined both to him and Marcellus the strictest secrecy as to what they had seen that night.

The terror which the sight of the ghost had left upon the senses of Hamlet, he being weak and dispirited before, almost unhinged his mind, and drove him beside his reason. And he, fearing that it would continue to have this effect, which might subject him to observation, and set his uncle upon his guard, if he suspected that he was meditating anything against him, or that Hamlet really knew more of his father's death than he professed, took up a strange resolution, from that time to counterfeit as if he were really and truly mad; thinking that he would be less an object of suspicion when his uncle should believe him incapable of any serious project, and that his real perturbation of mind would be best covered and pass concealed under a disguise of pretended lunacy.

From this time Hamlet affected a certain wildness and strangeness in his apparel, his speech, and behaviour, and did so excellently counterfeit the madman, that the king and queen were both deceived, and not thinking his grief for his father's death a sufficient cause to produce such a distemper, for they knew not of the appearance of the ghost, they concluded that his malady was love, and they thought they had found out the object.

Before Hamlet fell into the melancholy way which has been related, he had dearly loved a fair maid called Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius, the king's chief counsellor in affairs of state. He had sent her letters and rings, and made many tenders of his affection to her, and importuned her with love in honourable fashion: and she had given belief to his vows and importunities. But the melancholy which he fell into latterly had made him neglect her, and from the time he conceived the project of counterfeiting madness, he affected to treat her with unkindness, and a sort of rudeness: but she, good lady, rather than reproach him with being false to her, persuaded herself that it was nothing but the disease in his mind, and no settled unkindness, which had made him less observant of her than formerly; and she compared the faculties of his once noble mind and excellent understanding, impaired as they were with the deep melancholy that oppressed him, to sweet bells which in themselves are capable of most exquisite music, but when jangled out of tune, or rudely handled, produce only a harsh and unpleasing sound.

Though the rough business which Hamlet had in hand, the revenging of his father's death upon his murderer, did not suit with the playful state of courtship, or admit of the society of so idle a passion as love now seemed to him, yet it could not hinder but that soft thoughts of his Ophelia would come between, and in one of these moments, when he thought that his treatment of this gentle lady had been unreasonably harsh, he wrote her a letter full of wild starts of passion, and in extravagent terms, such as agreed with his supposed madness, but mixed with some gentle touches of affection, which could not but show to this honoured lady that a deep love for her yet lay at the bottom of his heart. He bade her to doubt the stars were fire, and to doubt that the sun did move, to doubt truth to be a liar, but never to doubt that he loved; with more of such extravagant phrases. This letter Ophelia dutifully showed to her father, and the old man thought himself bound to communicate it to the king and queen, who from that time supposed that the true cause of Hamlet's madness was love. And the queen wished that the good beauties of Ophelia might be the happy cause of his wildness, for so she hoped that her virtues might happily restore him to his accustomed way again, to both their honours.

But Hamlet's malady lay deeper than she supposed, or than could be so cured. His father's ghost, which he had seen, still haunted his imagination, and the sacred injunction to revenge his murder gave him no rest till it was accomplished. Every hour of delay seemed to him a sin, and a violation of his father's commands. Yet how to compass the death of the king, surrounded as he constantly was with his guards, was no easy matter. Or if it had been, the presence of the queen, Hamlet's mother, who was generally with the king, was a restraint upon his purpose, which he could not break through. Besides, the very circumstance that the usurper was his mother's husband filled him with some remorse, and still blunted the edge of his purpose. The mere act of putting a fellow-creature to death was in itself odious and terrible to a disposition naturally so gentle as Hamlet's was. His very melancholy, and the dejection of spirits he had so long been in, produced an irresoluteness and wavering of purpose, which kept him from proceeding to extremities. Moreover, he could not help having some scruples upon his mind, whether the spirit which he had seen was indeed his father, or whether it might not be the devil, who he had heard has power to take any form he pleases, and who might have assumed his father's shape only to take advantage of his weakness and his melancholy, to drive him to the doing of so desperate an act as murder. And he determined that he would have more certain grounds to go upon than a vision, or apparition, which might be a delusion.

While he was in this irresolute mind there came to the court certain players, in whom Hamlet formerly used to take delight, and particularly to hear one of them speak a tragical speech, describing the death of old Priam, King of Troy, with the grief of Hecuba his queen. Hamlet welcomed his old friends, the players, and remembering how that speech had formerly given him pleasure, requested the player to repeat it; which he did in so lively a manner, setting forth the cruel murder of the feeble old king, with the

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destruction of his people and city by fire, and the mad grief of the old queen, running barefoot up and down the palace, with a poor clout upon that head where a crown had been, and with nothing but a blanket upon her loins, snatched up in haste, where she had worn a royal robe; that not only it drew tears from all that stood by, who thought they saw the real scene, so lively was it represented, but even the player himself delivered it with a broken voice and real tears. This put Hamlet upon thinking, if that player could, so work himself up to passion by a mere fictitious speech, to weep for one that he had never seen, for Hecuba, that had been dead so many hundred years, how dull was he, who having a real motive and cue for passion, a real king and a dear father murdered, was yet so little moved, that his revenge all this while had seemed to have slept in dull and muddy forgetfulness! and while he meditated on actors and acting, and the powerful effects which a good play, represented to the life, has upon the spectator, he remembered the instance of some murderer, who seeing a murder on the stage, was by the mere force of the scene and resemblance of circumstances so affected, that on the spot he confessed the crime which he had committed. And he determined that these players should play something like the murder of his father before his uncle, and he would watch narrowly what effect it might have upon him, and from his looks he would be able to gather with more certainty if he were the murderer or not. To this effect he ordered a play to be prepared, to the representation of which he invited the king and queen.

The story of the play was of a murder done in Vienna upon a duke. The duke's name was Gonzago, his wife Baptista. The play showed how one Lucianus, a near relation to the duke, poisoned him in his garden for his estate, and how the murderer in a short time after got the love of Gonzago's wife.

At the representation of this play, the king, who did not know the trap which was laid for him, was present, with his queen and the whole court: Hamlet sitting attentively near him to observe his looks. The play began with a conversation between Gonzago and his wife, in which the lady made many protestations of love, and of never marrying a second husband, if she should outlive Gonzago; wishing she might be accursed if she ever took a second husband, and adding that no woman did so, but those wicked women who kill their first husbands. Hamlet observed the king his uncle change colour at this expression, and that it was as bad as wormwood both to him and to the queen. But when Lucianus, according to the story, came to poison Gonzago sleeping in the garden, the strong resemblance which it bore to his own wicked act upon the late king, his brother, whom he had poisoned in his garden, so struck upon the conscience of this usurper, that he was unable to sit out the rest of the play, but on a sudden calling for lights to his chamber, and affecting or partly feeling a sudden sickness, he abruptly left the theatre. The king being departed, the play was given over. Now Hamlet had seen enough to be satisfied that the words of the ghost were true, and no illusion; and in a fit of gaiety, like that which comes over a man who suddenly has some great doubt or scruple resolved, he swore to Horatio, that he would take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds. But before he could make up his resolution as to what measures of revenge he should take, now he was certainly informed that his uncle was his father's murderer, he was sent for by the queen his mother, to a private conference in her closet.

It was by desire of the king that the queen sent for Hamlet, that she might signify to her son how much his late behaviour had displeased them both, and the king, wishing to know all that passed at that conference, and thinking that the too partial report of a mother might let slip some part of Hamlet's words, which it might much import the king to know, Polonius, the old counsellor of state, was ordered to plant himself behind the hangings in the queen's closet, where he might unseen hear all that passed. This artifice was particularly adapted to the disposition of Polonius, who was a man grown old in crooked maxims and policies of state, and delighted to get at the knowledge of matters in an indirect and cunning way.

Hamlet being come to his mother, she began to tax him in the roundest way with his actions and behaviour, and she told him that he had given great offence to *his father*, meaning the king, his uncle, whom, because he had married her, she called Hamlet's father. Hamlet, sorely indignant that she should give so dear and honoured a name as father seemed to him, to a wretch who was indeed no better than the murderer of his true father, with some sharpness replied, "Mother, *you* have much offended *my father*." The queen said that was but an idle answer. "As good as the question deserved," said Hamlet. The queen asked him if he had forgotten who it was he was speaking to? "Alas!" replied Hamlet, "I wish I could forget. You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife; and you are my mother: I wish you were not what you are." "Nay, then," said the queen, "if you show me so little respect, I will set those to you that can speak," and was going to send the king or Polonius to him. But Hamlet would not let her go, now he had her alone, till he had tried if his words could not bring her to some sense of her wicked life; and, taking her by the wrist, he held her fast, and made her sit down. She, affrighted at his earnest manner, and fearful lest in his lunacy he should do her mischief, cried out; and a voice was heard from behind the hangings, "Help, help, the queen!" which Hamlet hearing, and verily thinking that it was the king himself there concealed, he drew his sword and stabbed at the place where the voice came from, as he would have stabbed a rat that ran there, till the voice ceasing, he concluded the person to be dead. But when he dragged forth the body, it was not the king, but Polonius, the old officious counsellor, that had planted himself as a spy behind the hangings. "Oh me!" exclaimed the queen, "what a rash and bloody deed have you done!" "A bloody deed, mother," replied Hamlet, "but not so bad as yours, who killed a king, and married his brother." Hamlet had gone too far to leave off here. He was now in the humour to speak plainly to his mother, and he pursued it. And though the faults of parents are to be tenderly treated by their children, yet in the case of great crimes the son may have leave to speak even to his own mother with some harshness, so as that harshness is meant for her good, and to turn her from her wicked ways, and not done for the purpose of upbraiding. And now this virtuous prince did in moving terms represent to the queen the heinousness of her offence, in being so forgetful of the dead king, his father, as in so short a space of time to marry with his brother and reputed murderer: such an act as, after the vows which she had sworn to her first husband, was enough to make all vows of women suspected, and all virtue to be accounted hypocrisy, wedding contracts to be less than gamesters' oaths, and religion to be a mockery and a mere form of words. He said she had done such a deed, that the heavens blushed at it, and the earth was sick of her because of it. And he showed her two pictures, the one of the late king, her first husband, and the other of the present king, her second husband, and he bade her mark the difference; what a grace was on the brow of his father, how like a god he looked! the curls of Apollo, the forehead of Jupiter, the eye of Mars, and a posture like to Mercury newly alighted on some heaven-kissing hill! this man, he said, *had been* her husband. And then he showed her whom she had got in his stead: how like a blight or a mildew he looked, for so he had blasted his wholesome brother. And the queen was sore ashamed that he should so turn her eyes inward upon her soul, which she now saw so black and deformed. And he asked her how she could continue to live with this man, and be a wife to him, who had murdered her first husband, and got the crown by as false means as a thief ——— and just as he spoke, the ghost of his father, such as he was in his lifetime, and such as he had lately seen it, entered the room, and Hamlet, in great terror, asked what it would have; and the ghost said that it came to remind him of the revenge he had promised, which Hamlet seemed to have forgot; and the ghost bade him speak to his mother, for the grief and terror she was in would else kill her. It then vanished, and was seen by none but Hamlet, neither could he by pointing to where it stood, or by any description, make his mother perceive it; who was terribly frightened all this while to hear him conversing, as it seemed to her, with nothing; and she imputed it to the disorder of his mind. But Hamlet begged her not to flatter her wicked soul in such a manner as to think that it was his madness, and not her own offences, which had brought his father's spirit again on the earth. And he bade her feel his pulse, how temperately it beat, not like a madman's. And he begged of her with tears, to confess herself to heaven for what was past, and for the future to avoid the company of the king, and be no more as a wife to him: and when she should show herself a mother to him, by respecting his father's memory, he would ask a blessing of her as a son. And she promising to observe his directions, the conference ended.

And now Hamlet was at leisure to consider who it was that in his unfortunate rashness he had killed: and when he came to see that it was Polonius, the father of the lady Ophelia, whom he so dearly loved, he drew apart the dead body, and, his spirits being now a little quieter, he wept for what he had done.

The unfortunate death of Polonius gave the king a pretence for sending Hamlet out of the kingdom. He would willingly have put him to death, fearing him as dangerous; but he dreaded the people, who loved Hamlet, and the queen, who, with all her faults, doted upon the prince, her son. So this subtle king, under pretence of providing for Hamlet's safety, that he might not be called to account for Polonius' death, caused him to be conveyed on board a ship bound for England, under the care of two courtiers, by whom he despatched letters to the English court, which in that time was in subjection and paid tribute to Denmark, requiring for special reasons there pretended, that Hamlet should be put to death as soon as he landed on English ground. Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, in the night-time secretly got at the letters, and skilfully erasing his own name, he in the stead of it put in the names of those two courtiers, who had the charge of him, to be put to death: then sealing up the letters, he put them into their place again. Soon after the ship was attacked by pirates, and a sea-fight commenced; in the course of which Hamlet, desirous to show his valour, with sword in hand singly boarded the enemy's vessel; while his own ship, in a cowardly manner, bore away, and leaving him to his fate, the two courtiers made the best of their way to England, charged with those letters the sense of which Hamlet had altered to their own deserved destruction.

The pirates, who had the prince in their power, showed themselves gentle enemies; and knowing whom they had got prisoner, in the hope that the prince might do them a good turn at court in recompense for any favour they might show him, they set Hamlet on shore at the nearest port in Denmark. From that place Hamlet wrote to the king, acquainting him with the strange chance which had brought him back to his own country, and saying that on the next day he should present himself before his majesty. When he got home, a sad spectacle offered itself the first thing to his eyes.

This was the funeral of the young and beautiful Ophelia, his once dear mistress. The wits of this young lady had begun to turn ever since her poor father's death. That he should die a violent death, and by the hands of the prince whom she loved, so affected this tender young maid, that in a little time she grew perfectly distracted, and would go about giving flowers away to the ladies of the court, and saying that they were for her father's burial, singing songs about love and about death, and sometimes such as had no meaning at all, as if she had no memory of what happened to her. There was a willow which grew slanting over a brook, and reflected its leaves on the stream. To this brook she came one day when she was unwatched, with garlands she had been making, mixed up of daisies and nettles, flowers and weeds together, and clambering up to hang her garland upon the boughs of the willow, a bough broke, and precipitated this fair young maid, garland, and all that she had gathered, into the water, where her clothes bore her up for a while, during which she chanted scraps of old tunes, like one insensible to her own distress, or as if she were a creature natural to that element: but long it was not before her garments, heavy with the wet, pulled her in from her melodious singing to a muddy and miserable death. It was the funeral of this fair maid which her brother Laertes was celebrating, the king and queen and whole court being present, when Hamlet arrived. He knew not what all this show imported, but stood on one side, not inclining to interrupt the ceremony. He saw the flowers strewed upon her grave, as the custom was in maiden burials, which the queen herself threw in; and as she threw them she said, "Sweets to the sweet! I thought to have decked thy bride-bed, sweet maid, not to have strewed thy grave. Thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife." And he heard her brother wish that violets might spring from her grave: and he saw him leap into the grave all frantic with grief, and bid the attendants pile mountains of earth upon him, that he might be buried with her. And Hamlet's love for this fair maid came back to him, and he could not bear that a brother should show so much transport of grief, for he thought that he loved Ophelia better than forty thousand brothers. Then discovering himself, he leaped into the grave where Laertes was, all as frantic or more frantic than he, and Laertes knowing him to be Hamlet, who had been the cause of his father's and his sister's death, grappled him by the throat as an enemy, till the attendants parted them: and Hamlet, after the funeral, excused his hasty act in throwing himself into the grave as if to brave Laertes; but he said he could not bear that any one should seem to outgo him in grief for the death of the fair Ophelia. And for the time these two noble youths seemed reconciled.

But out of the grief and anger of Laertes for the death of his father and Ophelia, the king, Hamlet's wicked uncle, contrived destruction for Hamlet. He set on Laertes, under cover of peace and reconciliation, to challenge Hamlet to a friendly trial of skill at fencing, which Hamlet accepting, a day was appointed to try the match. At this match all the court was present, and Laertes, by direction of the king, prepared a poisoned weapon. Upon this match great wagers were laid by the courtiers, as both Hamlet and Laertes were known to excel at this sword play; and Hamlet taking up the foils chose one, not at all suspecting the treachery of Laertes, or being careful to examine Laertes' weapon, who, instead of a foil or blunted sword, which the laws of fencing require, made use of one with a point, and poisoned. At first Laertes did but play with Hamlet, and suffered him to gain some advantages, which the dissembling king magnified and extolled beyond measure, drinking to Hamlet's success, and wagering rich bets upon the issue: but after a few pauses, Laertes growing warm made a deadly thrust at Hamlet with his poisoned weapon, and gave him a mortal blow. Hamlet incensed, but not knowing the whole of the treachery, in the scuffle exchanged his own innocent weapon for Laertes' deadly one, and with a thrust of Laertes' own sword repaid Laertes home, who was thus justly caught in his own treachery. In this instant the queen shrieked out that she was poisoned. She had inadvertently drunk out of a bowl which the king had prepared for Hamlet, in case, that being warm in fencing, he should call for drink: into this the treacherous king had infused a deadly poison, to make sure of Hamlet, if Laertes had failed. He had forgotten to warn the queen of the bowl, which she drank of, and immediately died, exclaiming with her last breath that she was poisoned. Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, ordered the doors to be shut, while he sought it out. Laertes told him to seek no farther, for he was the traitor; and feeling his life go away with the wound which Hamlet had given him, he made confession of the treachery he had used, and how he had fallen a victim to it: and he told Hamlet of the envenomed point, and said that Hamlet had not half an hour to live, for no medicine could cure him; and begging forgiveness of Hamlet, he died, with his last words accusing the king of being the contriver of the mischief. When Hamlet saw his end draw near, there being yet some venom left upon the sword, he suddenly turned upon his false uncle, and thrust the point of it to his heart, fulfilling the promise which he had made to his father's spirit, whose injunction was now accomplished, and his foul murder revenged upon the murderer. Then Hamlet, feeling his breath fail and life departing, turned to his dear friend Horatio, who had been spectator of this fatal tragedy; and with his dying breath requested him that he would live to tell his story to the world (for Horatio had made a motion as if he would slay himself to accompany the prince in death), and Horatio promised that he would make a true report, as one that was privy to all the circumstances. And, thus satisfied, the noble heart of Hamlet cracked; and Horatio and the bystanders with many tears commended the spirit of this sweet prince to the guardianship of angels. For Hamlet was a loving and a gentle prince, and greatly beloved for his many noble and princelike qualities; and if he had lived, would no doubt have proved a most royal and complete king to Denmark.

OTHELLO

BRABANTIO, the rich senator of Venice, had a fair daughter, the gentle Desdemona. She was sought to by divers suitors, both on account of her many virtuous qualities, and for her rich expectations. But among the suitors of her own clime and complexion, she saw none whom she could affect: for this noble lady, who regarded the mind more than the features of men, with a singularity rather to be admired than imitated, had chosen for the object of her affections, a Moor, a black, whom her father loved, and often invited to his house.

Neither is Desdemona to be altogether condemned for the unsuitableness of the person whom she selected for her lover. Bating that Othello was black, the noble Moor wanted nothing which might recommend him to the affections of the greatest lady. He was a soldier, and a brave one; and by his conduct in bloody wars against the Turks, had risen to the rank of general in the Venetian service, and was esteemed and trusted by the state.

He had been a traveller, and Desdemona (as is the manner of ladies) loved to hear him tell the story of his adventures, which he would run through from his earliest recollection; the battles, sieges, and encounters, which he had passed through; the perils he had been exposed to by land and by water; his hair-breadth escapes, when he had entered a breach, or marched up to the mouth of a cannon; and how he had been taken prisoner by the insolent enemy, and sold to slavery; how he demeaned himself in that state, and how he escaped: all these accounts, added to the narration of the strange things he had seen in foreign countries, the vast wilderness and romantic caverns, the quarries, the rocks and mountains, whose heads are in the clouds; of the savage nations, the cannibals who are man-eaters, and a race of people in Africa whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders: these travellers' stories would so enchain the attention of Desdemona, that if she were called off at any time by household affairs, she would despatch with all haste that business, and return, and with a greedy ear devour Othello's discourse. And once he took advantage of a pliant hour, and drew from her a prayer, that he would tell her the whole story of his life at large, of which she had heard so much, but only by parts: to which he consented, and beguiled her of many a tear, when he spoke of some distressful stroke which his youth had suffered.

His story being done, she gave him for his pains a world of sighs: she swore a pretty oath, that it was all passing strange, and pitiful, wondrous pitiful: she wished (she said) she had not heard it, yet she wished that heaven had made her such a man; and then she thanked him, and told him, if he had a friend who loved her, he had only to teach him how to tell his story, and that would woo her. Upon this hint, delivered not with more frankness than modesty, accompanied with certain bewitching prettiness, and blushes, which Othello could not but understand, he spoke more openly of his love, and in this golden opportunity gained the consent of the generous lady Desdemona privately to marry him.

Neither Othello's colour nor his fortune were such that it could be hoped Brabantio would accept him for a son-in-law. He had left his daughter free; but he did expect that, as the manner of noble Venetian ladies was, she would choose ere long a husband of senatorial rank or expectations; but in this he was deceived; Desdemona loved the Moor, though he was black, and devoted her heart and fortunes to his valiant parts and qualities; so was her heart subdued to an implicit devotion to the man she had selected for a husband, that his very colour, which to all but this discerning lady would have proved an insurmountable objection, was by her esteemed above all the white skins and clear complexions of the young Venetian nobility, her suitors.

Their marriage, which, though privately carried, could not long be kept a secret, came to the ears of the old man, Brabantio, who appeared in a solemn council of the senate, as an accuser of the Moor Othello, who by spells and witchcraft (he maintained) had seduced the affections of the fair Desdemona to marry him, without the consent of her father, and against the obligations of hospitality.

At this juncture of time it happened that the state of Venice had immediate need of the services of Othello, news having arrived that the Turks with mighty preparation had fitted out a fleet, which was bending its course to the island of Cyprus, with intent to regain that strong post from the Venetians, who then held it; in this emergency the state turned its eyes upon Othello, who alone was deemed adequate to conduct the defence of Cyprus against the Turks. So that Othello, now summoned before the senate, stood in their presence at once as a candidate for a great state employment, and as a culprit, charged with offences which by the laws of Venice were made capital.

The age and senatorial character of old Brabantio, commanded a most patient hearing from that grave assembly; but the incensed father conducted his accusation with so much intemperance, producing likelihoods and allegations for proofs, that, when Othello was called upon for his defence, he had only to relate a plain tale of the course of his love; which he did with such an artless eloquence, recounting the whole story of his wooing, as we have related it above, and delivered his speech with so noble a plainness (the evidence of truth), that the duke, who sat as chief judge, could not help confessing that a tale so told would have won his daughter too: and the spells and conjurations which Othello had used in his courtship, plainly appeared to have been no more than the honest arts of men in love; and the only witchcraft which he had used, the faculty of telling a soft tale to win a lady's ear.

This statement of Othello was confirmed by the testimony of the lady Desdemona herself, who appeared in court, and professing a duty to her father for life and education, challenged leave of him to profess a yet higher duty to her lord and husband, even so much as her mother had shown in preferring him (Brabantio) above *her* father.

"HE BEGUILED HER OF MANY A TEAR, WHEN HE SPOKE OF WHAT HIS YOUTH HAD SUFFERED"—*Page 247*

The old senator, unable to maintain his plea, called the Moor to him with many expressions of sorrow, and, as an act of necessity, bestowed upon him his daughter, whom, if he had been free to withhold her (he told him), he would with all his heart have kept from him; adding, that he was glad at soul that he had no other child, for this behaviour of Desdemona would have taught him to be a tyrant, and hang clogs on them for her desertion.

This difficulty being got over, Othello, to whom custom had rendered the hardships of a military life as natural as food and rest are to other men, readily undertook the management of the wars in Cyprus: and Desdemona, preferring the honour of her lord (though with danger) before the indulgence of those idle delights in which new-married people usually waste their time, cheerfully consented to his going.

No sooner were Othello and his lady landed in Cyprus, than news arrived, that a desperate tempest had dispersed the Turkish fleet, and thus the island was secure from any immediate apprehension of an attack. But the war, which Othello was to suffer, was now beginning; and the enemies, which malice stirred up against his innocent lady, proved in their nature more deadly than strangers or infidels.

Among all the general's friends no one possessed the confidence of Othello more entirely than Cassio. Michael Cassio was a young soldier, a Florentine, gay, amorous, and of pleasing address, favourite qualities with women; he was handsome and eloquent, and exactly such a person as might alarm the jealousy of a man advanced in years (as Othello in some measure was), who had married a young and beautiful wife; but Othello was as free from jealousy as he was noble, and as incapable of suspecting as of doing a base action. He had employed this Cassio in his love affair with Desdemona, and Cassio had been a sort of go-between in his suit: for Othello, fearing that himself had not those soft parts of conversation which please ladies, and finding these qualities in his friend, would often depute Cassio to go (as he phrased it) a courting for him: such innocent simplicity being rather an honour than a blemish to the character of the valiant Moor. So that no wonder, if next to Othello himself (but at far distance, as beseems a virtuous wife) the gentle Desdemona loved and trusted Cassio. Nor had the marriage of this couple made any difference in their behaviour to Michael Cassio. He frequented their house, and his free and rattling talk was no unpleasing variety to Othello, who was himself of a more serious temper: for such tempers are observed often to delight in their contraries, as a relief from the oppressive excess of their own: and Desdemona and Cassio would talk and laugh together, as in the days when he went a courting for his friend.

Othello had lately promoted Cassio to be the lieutenant, a place of trust, and nearest to the general's person. This promotion gave great offence to Iago, an older officer who thought he had a better claim than Cassio, and would often ridicule Cassio as a fellow fit only for the company of ladies, and one that knew no more of the art of war or how to set an army in array for battle, than a girl. Iago hated Cassio, and he hated Othello, as well for favouring Cassio, as for an unjust suspicion, which he had lightly taken up against Othello, that the Moor was too fond of Iago's wife Emilia. From these imaginary provocations, the plotting mind of Iago conceived a horrid scheme of revenge, which should involve both Cassio, the Moor, and Desdemona, in one common ruin.

Iago was artful, and had studied human nature deeply, and he knew that of all the torments which afflict the mind of man (and far beyond bodily torture), the pains of jealousy were the most intolerable, and had the sorest sting. If he could succeed in making Othello jealous of Cassio, he thought it would be an exquisite plot of revenge, and might end in the death of Cassio or Othello, or both; he cared not.

The arrival of the general and his lady, in Cyprus, meeting with the news of the dispersion of the enemy's fleet, made a sort of holiday in the island. Everybody gave themselves up to feasting and making merry. Wine flowed in abundance, and cups went round to the health of the black Othello, and his lady the fair Desdemona.

Cassio had the direction of the guard that night, with a charge from Othello to keep the soldiers from excess in drinking, that no brawl might arise, to fright the inhabitants, or disgust them with the new-landed forces. That night Iago began his deep-laid plans of mischief: under colour of loyalty and love to the general, he enticed Cassio to make rather too free with the bottle (a great fault in an officer upon guard). Cassio for a time resisted, but he could not long hold out against the honest freedom which Iago knew how to put on, but kept swallowing glass after glass (as Iago still plied him with drink and encouraging songs), and Cassio's tongue ran over in praise of the lady Desdemona, whom he again and again toasted, affirming that she was a most exquisite lady: until at last the enemy which he put into his mouth stole away his brains; and upon some provocation given him by a fellow whom Iago had set on, swords were drawn, and Montano, a worthy officer, who interfered to appease the dispute, was wounded in the scuffle. The riot now began to be general, and Iago, who had set on foot the mischief, was foremost in spreading the alarm, causing the castle-bell to be rung (as if some dangerous mutiny instead of a slight drunken quarrel had arisen): the alarm-bell ringing awakened Othello, who, dressing in a hurry, and coming to the scene of action, questioned Cassio of the cause. Cassio was now come to himself, the effect of the wine having a little gone off, but was too much ashamed to reply; and Iago, pretending a great reluctance to accuse Cassio, but, as it were, forced into it by Othello, who insisted to know the truth, gave an account of the whole matter (leaving out his own share in it, which Cassio was too far gone to remember) in such a manner, as while he seemed to make Cassio's offence less, did indeed make it appear greater than it was. The result was, that Othello, who was a strict observer of discipline, was compelled to take away Cassio's place of lieutenant from him.

Thus did Iago's first artifice succeed completely; he had now undermined his hated rival, and thrust him out of his place: but a further use was hereafter to be made of the adventure of this disastrous night.

Cassio, whom this misfortune had entirely sobered, now lamented to his seeming friend Iago that he should have been such a fool as to transform himself into a beast. He was undone, for how could he ask the general for his place again? he would tell him he was a drunkard. He despised himself. Iago, affecting to make light of it, said, that he, or any man living, might be drunk upon occasion; it remained now to make the best of a bad bargain; the general's wife was now the general, and could do anything with Othello; that he were best to apply to the lady Desdemona to mediate for him with her lord; that she was of a frank, obliging disposition, and would readily undertake a good office of this sort, and set Cassio right again in the general's favour; and then this crack in their love would be made stronger than ever. A good advice of Iago, if it had not been given for wicked purposes, which will after appear.

Cassio did as Iago advised him, and made application to the lady Desdemona, who was easy to be won over in any honest suit; and she promised Cassio that she should be his solicitor with her lord, and rather die than give up his cause. This she immediately set about in so earnest and pretty a manner, that Othello, who was mortally offended with Cassio, could not put her off. When he pleaded delay, and that it was too soon to pardon such an offender, she would not be beat back, but insisted that it should be the next night, or the morning after, or the next morning to that at farthest. Then she showed how penitent and humbled poor Cassio was, and that his offence did not deserve so sharp a check. And when Othello still hung back, "What! my lord," said she, "that I should have so much to do to plead for Cassio, Michael Cassio, that came a courting for you, and oftentimes, when I have spoken in dispraise of you, has taken your part! I count this but a little thing to ask of you. When I mean to try your love indeed, I shall ask a weighty matter." Othello could deny nothing to such a pleader, and only requesting that Desdemona would leave the time to him, promised to receive Michael Cassio again in favour.

It happened that Othello and Iago had entered into the room where Desdemona was, just as Cassio, who had been imploring her intercession, was departing at the opposite door: and Iago, who was full of art, said in a low voice, as if to himself, "I like not that." Othello took no great notice of what he said; indeed, the conference which immediately took place with his lady put it out of his head; but he remembered it afterwards. For when Desdemona was gone, Iago, as if for mere satisfaction of his thought, questioned Othello whether Michael Cassio, when Othello was courting his lady, knew of his love. To this the general answering in the affirmative, and adding, that he had gone between them very often during the courtship, Iago knitted his brow, as if he had got fresh light on some terrible matter, and cried, "Indeed!" This brought into Othello's mind the words which Iago had let fall upon entering the room, and seeing Cassio with Desdemona; and he began to think there was some meaning in all this: for he deemed Iago to be a just man, and full of love and honesty, and what in a false knave would be tricks, in him seemed to be the natural workings of an honest mind, big with something too great for utterance: and Othello prayed Iago to speak what he knew, and to give his worst thoughts words. "And what," said Iago, "if some thoughts very vile should have intruded into my breast, as where is the palace into which foul things do not enter?" Then Iago went on to say, what a pity it were, if any trouble should arise to Othello out of his imperfect observations; that it would not be for Othello's peace to know his thoughts; that people's good names were not to be taken away for slight suspicions; and when Othello's curiosity was raised almost to distraction with these hints and scattered words, Iago, as if in earnest care for Othello's peace of mind, besought him to beware of jealousy: with such art did this villain raise suspicions in the unguarded Othello, by the very caution which he pretended to give him against suspicion. "I know," said Othello, "that my wife is fair, loves company and feasting, is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well: but where virtue is, these qualities are virtuous. I must have proof before I think her dishonest." Then Iago, as if glad that Othello was slow to believe ill of his lady, frankly declared that he had no proof, but begged Othello to observe her behaviour well, when Cassio was by; not to be jealous nor too secure neither, for that he (Iago) knew the dispositions of the Italian ladies, his countrywomen, better than Othello could do; and that in Venice the wives let heaven see many pranks they dared not show their husbands. Then he artfully insinuated that Desdemona deceived her father in marrying with Othello, and carried it so closely, that the poor old man thought that witchcraft had been used. Othello was much moved with this argument, which brought the matter home to him, for if she had deceived her father, why might she not deceive her husband?

Iago begged pardon for having moved him; but Othello, assuming an indifference, while he was really shaken with inward grief at Iago's words, begged him to go on, which Iago did with many apologies, as if unwilling to produce anything against Cassio, whom he called his friend: he then came strongly to the point, and reminded Othello how Desdemona had refused many suitable matches of her own clime and complexion, and had married him, a Moor, which showed unnatural in her, and proved her to have a headstrong will; and when her better judgment returned, how probable it was she should fall upon comparing Othello with the fine forms and clear white complexions of the young Italians her countrymen. He concluded with advising Othello to put off his reconcilement with Cassio a little longer, and in the meanwhile to note with what earnestness Desdemona should intercede in his behalf; for that much would be seen in that. So mischievously did this artful villain lay his plots to turn the gentle qualities of this innocent lady into her destruction, and make a net for her out of her own goodness to entrap her: first setting Cassio on to entreat her mediation, and then out of that very mediation contriving stratagems for her ruin.

The conference ended with Iago's begging Othello to account his wife innocent, until he had more decisive proof; and Othello promised to be patient; but from that moment the deceived Othello never tasted content of mind. Poppy, nor the juice of mandragora, nor all the sleeping potions in the world, could ever again restore to him that sweet rest, which he had enjoyed but yesterday. His occupation sickened upon him. He no longer took delight in arms. His heart, that used to be roused at the sight of troops, and banners, and battle-array, and would stir and leap at the sound of a drum, or a trumpet, or a neighing war-horse, seemed to have lost all that pride and ambition which are a soldier's virtue; and his military ardour and all his old joys forsook him. Sometimes he thought his wife honest, and at times he thought her not so; sometimes he thought Iago just, and at times he thought him not so; then he would wish that he had never known of it; he was not the worse for her loving Cassio, so long as he knew it not: torn to pieces with these distracting thoughts, he once laid hold on Iago's throat, and demanded proof of Desdemona's guilt, or threatened instant death for his having belied her. Iago, feigning indignation that his honesty should be taken for a vice, asked Othello, if he had not sometimes seen a handkerchief spotted with strawberries in his wife's hand. Othello answered, that he had given her such a one, and that it was his first gift. "That same handkerchief," said Iago, "did I see Michael Cassio this day wipe his face with." "If it be as you say," said Othello, "I will not rest till a wide revenge swallow them up: and first, for a token of your fidelity, I expect that Cassio shall be put to death within three days; and for that fair devil (meaning his lady), I will withdraw and devise some swift means of death for her."

Trifles light as air are to the jealous proofs as strong as holy writ. A handkerchief of his wife's seen in Cassio's hand, was motive enough to the deluded Othello to pass sentence of death upon them both, without once inquiring how Cassio came by it. Desdemona had never given such a present to Cassio, nor would this constant lady have wronged her lord with doing so naughty a thing as giving his presents to another man; both Cassio and Desdemona were innocent of any offence against Othello: but the wicked Iago, whose spirits never slept in contrivance of villany, had made his wife (a good, but a weak woman) steal this handkerchief from Desdemona, under pretence of getting the work copied, but in reality to drop it in Cassio's way, where he might find it, and give a handle to Iago's suggestion that it was Desdemona's present.

Othello, soon after meeting his wife, pretended that he had a headache (as he might indeed with truth), and desired her to lend him her handkerchief to hold to his temples. She did so. "Not this," said Othello, "but that handkerchief I gave you." Desdemona had it not about her (for indeed it was stolen, as we have related). "How?" said Othello, "this is a fault indeed. That handkerchief an Egyptian woman gave to my mother; the woman was a witch and could read people's thoughts: she told my mother, while she kept it, it would make her amiable, and my father would love her; but, if she lost it, or gave it away, my father's fancy would turn, and he would loathe her as much as he had loved her. She dying gave it to me, and bade me, if I ever married, to give it to my wife. I did so; take heed of it. Make it a darling as precious as your eye." "Is it possible?" said the frighted lady. "'Tis true," continued Othello; "it is a magical handkerchief; a sibyl that had lived in the world two hundred years, in a fit of prophetic fury worked it; the silkworms that furnished the silk were hallowed, and it was dyed in a mummy of maidens' hearts conserved." Desdemona, hearing the wondrous virtues of the handkerchief, was ready to die with fear, for she plainly perceived she had lost it, and with it, she feared, the affections of her husband. Then Othello started, and looked as if he were going to do some rash thing, and still he demanded the handkerchief, which when she could not produce, she tried to divert her husband from too serious thoughts, and cheerfully told him she saw all his talk about the handkerchief was only to put her off from her suit about Michael Cassio, whom she went on to praise (as Iago had foretold), till Othello in perfect distraction burst out of the room, and then Desdemona, though unwillingly, began to suspect that her lord was jealous.

What cause she could have ministered to him she knew not, and then she accused herself for accusing the noble Othello, and thought to be sure that some untoward news from Venice, or some state troubles had puddled his spirits, and made his temper not so sweet as formerly. And she said, "Men are not gods, and we must not look for that observance from them when they are married, which they show us on the bridal day." And she beshrewed herself for so unkindly judging of his unkindness.

Again Othello and Desdemona met, and he accused her more plainly of being unfaithful, and of loving another man, but he did not name whom: and Othello wept, and Desdemona said, "Alas! the heavy day! why do you weep?" And Othello told her, he could have borne all sorts of evils with fortitude — poverty, and disease, and disgrace; but her infidelity had broken his heart: and he called her a weed, that looked so fair, and smelled so sweet, that the sense ached at it; and wished she had never been born. And when he had left her, this innocent lady was so stupefied with wonder at her lord's untrue suspicion of her, that a weight-like sleep came over her, and she only desired her attendant to make her bed, and to lay her wedding-sheets upon it, saying, that when people teach their babes, they do it by gentle means and easy tasks, and Othello might have chid her so; for in good faith she was but a child when she was chidden. And this was all the complaint which this gentle lady made.

Desdemona being retired to bed expecting her lord would follow her, soon fell into a slumber, the effect of her troubled spirits, when Othello entered the chamber, full of the black purpose which he had meditated of putting his lady to death. But when he saw her asleep, he thought he would not shed her blood, nor scar that white skin of hers, more white than alabaster. But he was resolved she should die; else (as he said) she would live to betray more men, as she had done him. Then he kissed her for the last time (as he said), and that kiss was so sweet, that he must needs kiss her again: and he wept, but he said they were cruel tears.

Desdemona was awakened with his kisses, and she looked upon Othello, and she saw him gnaw his under lip, and roll his eyes, and she knew he was always fatal when he looked so: and he bade her prepare for death, and to say her prayers, for he would not kill her soul. And this innocent wife, as she lay at his mercy, begged for compassion, and to know her fault, and then he named Cassio, and the handkerchief which (he said) she had given him; and as the guiltless lady was proceeding to clear herself he suddenly would hear no more, but covering her up in the bed-clothes, stifled her till she died.

In this instant of time was brought into the house Cassio, wounded and bleeding, whom Iago had set one of his creatures on to assassinate; but the fellow not succeeding in his attempt to kill Cassio (whom he wounded, but not mortally), and being himself killed by Iago to prevent discovery, in his pockets were found several letters, which made the guilt of Iago, and the innocence of Cassio, clear beyond all doubt; and Cassio now came to beg pardon of Othello, and to ask wherein he had offended him, that he had employed Iago to murder him.

This discovery was as a thunderstroke to Othello, who now plainly saw that he was no better than a murderer, and that his wife (poor innocent lady) had been ever faithful to him; the extreme anguish of which discovery making life insupportable, he fell upon his sword, and throwing himself upon the body of his dear injured lady, expired.

These rash acts raised much passion of horror and amazement in the bystanders, for Othello had borne a fair reputation, and till he was wrought upon by the arts of a villain, which his own noble nature never gave him leave to suspect, he was a loving and a doting husband. He had loved not wisely, but too well; and his manly eyes (when he learned his mistake), though not used to weep on every small occasion, dropped tears as fast as the Arabian trees their gum. And when he was dead all his former merits and his valiant acts were remembered. Nothing now remained for his successor but to put the utmost censure of the law in force against Iago, who was executed with strict tortures; and to send word to the state of Venice of the lamentable death of their renowned general.

PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE

PERICLES, prince of Tyre, became a voluntary exile from his dominions, to avert the dreadful calamities which Antiochus, the wicked emperor of Greece, threatened to bring upon his subjects and city of Tyre, in revenge for a discovery which the prince had made of a shocking deed which the emperor had done in secret; as commonly it proves dangerous to pry into the hidden crimes of great ones. Leaving the government of his people in the hands of his able and honest minister, Helicanus, Pericles set sail from Tyre, thinking to absent himself till the wrath of Antiochus, who was mighty, should be appeased.

The first place which the prince directed his course to was Tarsus, and hearing that the city of Tarsus was at that time suffering under a severe famine, he took with him store of provisions for its relief. On his arrival he found the city reduced to the utmost distress; and, he coming like a messenger from heaven with his unhoped-for succour, Cleon, the governor of Tarsus, welcomed him with boundless thanks. Pericles had not been here many days, before letters came from his faithful minister, warning him that it was not safe for him to stay at Tarsus, for Antiochus knew of his abode, and by secret emissaries despatched for that purpose sought his life. Upon receipt of these letters Pericles put out to sea again, amidst the blessings and prayers of a whole people who had been fed by his bounty.

He had not sailed far, when his ship was overtaken by a dreadful storm, and every man on board perished except Pericles, who was cast by the sea-waves naked on an unknown shore, where he had not wandered long before he met with some poor fishermen, who invited him to their homes, giving him clothes and provisions. The fishermen told Pericles the name of their country was Pentapolis, and that their king was Simonides, commonly called the good Simonides, because of his peaceable reign and good government. From them he also learned that king Simonides had a fair young daughter, and that the following day was her birthday, when a grand tournament was to be held at court, many princes and knights being come from all parts to try their skill in arms for the love of Thaisa, this fair princess. While the prince was listening to this account, and secretly lamenting the loss of his good armour, which disabled him from making one among these valiant knights, another fisherman brought in a complete suit of armour that he had taken out of the sea with his fishing-net, which proved to be the very armour he had lost. When Pericles beheld his own armour, he said, "Thanks, Fortune; after all my crosses you give me somewhat to repair myself. This armour was bequeathed to me by my dead father, for whose dear sake I have so loved it, that whithersoever I went, I still have kept it by me, and the rough sea that parted it from me, having now become calm, hath given it back again, for which I thank it, for, since I have my father's gift again, I think my shipwreck no misfortune."

The next day Pericles, clad in his brave father's armour, repaired to the royal court of Simonides, where he performed wonders at the tournament, vanquishing with ease all the brave knights and valiant princes who contended with him in arms for the honour of Thaisa's love. When brave warriors contended at court tournaments for the love of king's daughters, if one proved sole victor over all the rest, it was usual for the great lady for whose sake these deeds of valour were undertaken, to bestow all her respect upon the conqueror, and Thaisa did not depart from this custom, for she presently dismissed all the princes and knights whom Pericles had vanquished, and distinguished him by her especial favour and regard, crowning him with the wreath of victory, as king of that day's happiness; and Pericles became a most passionate lover of this beauteous princess from the first moment he beheld her.

The good Simonides so well approved of the valour and noble qualities of Pericles, who was indeed a most accomplished gentleman, and well learned in all excellent arts, that though he knew not the rank of this royal stranger (for Pericles for fear of Antiochus gave out that he was a private gentleman of Tyre), yet did not Simonides disdain to accept of the valiant unknown for a son-in-law, when he perceived his daughter's affections were firmly fixed upon him.

Pericles had not been many months married to Thaisa, before he received intelligence that his enemy Antiochus was dead; and that his subjects of Tyre, impatient of his long absence, threatened to revolt, and talked of placing Helicanus upon his vacant throne. This news came from Helicanus himself, who, being a loyal subject to his royal master, would not accept of the high dignity offered him, but sent to let Pericles know their intentions, that he might return home and resume his lawful right. It was matter of great surprise and joy to Simonides, to find that his son-in-law (the obscure knight) was the renowned prince of Tyre; yet again he regretted that he was not the private gentleman he supposed him to be, seeing that he must now part both with his admired son-in-law and his beloved daughter, whom he feared to trust to the perils of the sea, because Thaisa was with child; and Pericles himself wished her to remain with her father till after her confinement, but the poor lady so earnestly desired to go with her husband, that at last they consented, hoping she would reach Tyre before she was brought to bed.

The sea was no friendly element to unhappy Pericles, for long before they reached Tyre another dreadful tempest arose, which so terrified Thaisa that she was taken ill, and in a short space of time her nurse Lychorida came to Pericles with a little child in her arms, to tell the prince the sad tidings that his wife died the moment her little babe was born. She held the babe towards its father, saying, "Here is a thing too young for such a place. This is the child of your dead queen." No tongue can tell the dreadful sufferings of Pericles when he heard his wife was dead. As soon as he could speak, he said, "O you gods, why do you make us love your goodly gifts, and then snatch those gifts away?" "Patience, good sir," said Lychorida, "here is all that is left alive of our dead queen, a little daughter, and for your child's sake be more manly. Patience, good sir, even for the sake of this precious charge." Pericles took the new-born infant in his arms, and he said to the little babe, "Now may your life be mild, for a more blusterous birth had never babe! May your condition be mild and gentle, for you have had the rudest welcome that ever prince's child did meet with! May that which follows be happy, for you have had as chiding a nativity as fire, air, water, earth, and heaven could make to herald you from the womb! Even at the first, your loss," meaning in the death of her mother, "is more than all the joys, which you shall find upon this earth to which you are come a new visitor, shall be able to recompense."

The storm still continuing to rage furiously, and the sailors having a superstition that while a dead body remained in the ship the storm would never cease, they came to Pericles to demand that his queen should be thrown overboard; and they said, "What courage, sir? God save you!" "Courage enough," said the sorrowing prince: "I do not fear the storm; it has done to me its worst; yet for the love of this poor infant, this fresh new seafarer, I wish the storm was over." "Sir," said the sailors, "your queen must overboard. The sea works high, the wind is loud, and the storm will not abate till the ship be cleared of the dead." Though Pericles knew how weak and unfounded this superstition was, yet he patiently submitted, saying, "As you think meet. Then she must overboard, most wretched queen!" And now this unhappy prince went to take a last view of his dear wife, and as he looked on his Thaisa, he said, "A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear; no light, no fire; the unfriendly elements forget thee utterly, nor have I time to bring thee hallowed to thy grave, but must cast thee scarcely coffined into the sea, where for a monument upon thy bones the humming waters must overwhelm thy corpse, lying with simple shells. O Lychorida, bid Nester bring me spices, ink, and paper, my casket and my jewels, and bid Nicandor bring me the satin coffin. Lay the babe upon the pillow, and go about this suddenly, Lychorida, while I say a priestly farewell to my Thaisa."

They brought Pericles a large chest, in which (wrapped in a satin shroud) he placed his queen, and sweet-smelling spices he strewed over her, and beside her he placed rich jewels, and a written paper, telling who she was, and praying if haply any one should find the chest which contained the body of his wife, they would give her burial: and then with his own hands he cast the chest into the sea. When the storm was over, Pericles ordered the sailors to make for Tarsus. "For," said Pericles, "the babe cannot hold out till we come to Tyre. At Tarsus I will leave it at careful nursing."

After that tempestuous night when Thaisa was thrown into the sea, and while it was yet early morning, as Cerimon, a worthy gentleman of Ephesus, and a most skilful physician, was standing by the sea-side, his servants brought to him a chest, which they said the sea-waves had thrown on the land. "I never saw," said one of them, "so huge a billow as cast it on our shore." Cerimon ordered the chest to be conveyed to his own house, and when it was opened he beheld with wonder the body of a young and lovely lady; and the sweet-smelling spices and rich casket of jewels made him conclude it was some great person who was thus strangely entombed: searching farther, he discovered a paper, from which he learned that the corpse which lay as dead before him had been a queen, and wife to Pericles, prince of Tyre; and much admiring at the strangeness of that accident, and more pitying the husband who had lost this sweet lady, he said, "If you are living, Pericles, you have a heart that even cracks with woe." Then observing attentively Thaisa's face, he saw how fresh and unlike death her looks were, and he said, "They were too hasty that threw you into the sea:" for he did not believe her to be dead. He ordered a fire to be made, and proper cordials to be brought, and soft music to be played, which might help to calm her amazed spirits if she should revive; and he said to those who crowded round her, wondering at what they saw, "I pray you, gentlemen, give her air; this queen will live; she has not been entranced above five hours; and see, she begins to blow into life again; she is alive; behold, her eyelids move; this fair creature will live to make us weep to hear her fate." Thaisa had never died, but after the birth of her little baby had fallen into a deep swoon, which made all that saw her conclude her to be dead; and now by the care of this kind gentleman she once more revived to light and life; and opening her eyes, she said, "Where am I? Where is my lord? What world is this?" By gentle degrees Cerimon let her understand what had befallen her; and when he thought she was enough recovered to bear the sight, he showed her the paper written by her husband, and the jewels; and she looked on the paper, and said, "It is my lord's writing. That I was shipped at sea, I well remember, but whether there delivered of my babe, by the holy gods I cannot rightly say; but since my wedded lord I never shall see again, I will put on a vestal livery, and never more have joy." "Madam," said Cerimon, "if you purpose as you speak, the temple of Diana is not far distant from hence; there you may abide as a vestal. Moreover, if you please, a niece of mine shall there attend you." This proposal was accepted with thanks by Thaisa; and when she was perfectly recovered, Cerimon placed her in the temple of Diana, where she became a vestal or priestess of that goddess, and passed her days in sorrowing for her husband's supposed loss, and in the most devout exercises of those times.

Pericles carried his young daughter (whom he named Marina, because she was born at sea) to Tarsus, intending to leave her with Cleon, the governor of that city, and his wife Dionysia, thinking, for the good he had done to them at the time of their famine, they would be kind to his little motherless daughter. When Cleon saw prince Pericles, and heard of the great loss which had befallen him, he said, "O your sweet queen, that it had pleased Heaven you could have brought her hither to have blessed my eyes with the sight of her!" Pericles, replied, "We must obey the powers above us. Should I rage and roar as the sea does in which my Thaisa lies, yet the end must be as it is. My gentle babe, Marina here, I must charge your charity with her. I leave her the infant of your care, beseeching you to give her princely training." And then turning to Cleon's wife, Dionysia, he said, "Good madam, make me blessed in your care in bringing up my child:" and she answered, "I have a child myself who shall not be more dear to my respect than yours, my lord;" and Cleon made the like promise, saying, "Your noble services, prince Pericles, in feeding my whole people with your corn (for which in their prayers they daily remember you) must in your child be thought on. If I should neglect your child, my whole people that were by you relieved would force me to my duty; but if to that I need a spur, the gods revenge it on me and mine to the end of generation." Pericles, being thus assured that his child would be carefully attended to, left her to the protection of Cleon and his wife Dionysia, and with her he left the nurse Lychorida. When he went away, the little Marina knew not her loss, but Lychorida wept sadly at parting with her royal master. "O, no tears, Lychorida," said Pericles: "no tears; look to your little mistress, on whose grace you may depend hereafter."

Pericles arrived in safety at Tyre, and was once more settled in the quiet possession of his throne, while his woeful queen, whom he thought dead, remained at Ephesus. Her little babe Marina, whom this hapless mother had never seen, was brought up by Cleon in a manner suitable to her high birth. He gave her the most careful education, so that by the time Marina attained the age of fourteen years, the most deeply-learned men were not more studied in the learning of those times than was Marina. She sang like one immortal, and danced as goddess-like, and with her needle she was so skilful that she seemed to compose nature's own shapes, in birds, fruits, or flowers, the natural roses being scarcely more like to each other than they were to Marina's silken flowers. But when she had gained from education all these graces, which made her the general wonder, Dionysia, the wife of Cleon, became her mortal enemy from jealousy, by reason that her own daughter, from the slowness of her mind, was not able to attain to that perfection wherein Marina excelled: and finding that all praise was bestowed on Marina, whilst her daughter, who was of the same age, and had been educated with the same care as Marina, though not with the same success, was in comparison disregarded, she formed a project to remove Marina out of the way, vainly imagining that her untoward daughter would be more respected when Marina was no more seen. To encompass this she employed a man to murder Marina, and she well timed her wicked design, when Lychorida, the faithful nurse, had just died. Dionysia was discoursing with the man she had commanded to commit this murder, when the young Marina was weeping over the dead Lychorida. Leonine, the man she employed to do this bad deed, though he was a very wicked man, could hardly be persuaded to undertake it, so had Marina won all hearts to love her. He said, "She is a goodly creature!" "The fitter then the gods should have her," replied her merciless enemy: "here she comes weeping for the death of her nurse Lychorida: are you resolved to obey me?" Leonine, fearing to disobey her, replied, "I am resolved." And so, in that one short sentence, was the matchless Marina doomed to an untimely death. She now approached, with a basket of flowers in her hand, which she said she would daily strew over the grave of good Lychorida. The purple violet and the marigold should as a carpet hang upon her grave, while summer days did last. "Alas, for me!" she said, "poor unhappy maid, born in a tempest, when my mother died. This world to me is like a lasting storm, hurrying me from my friends." "How now, Marina," said the dissembling Dionysia, "do you weep alone? How does it chance my daughter is not with you? Do not sorrow for Lychorida, you have a nurse in me. Your beauty is quite changed with this unprofitable woe. Come, give me your flowers, the sea-air will spoil them; and walk with Leonine: the air is fine, and will enliven you. Come, Leonine, take her by the arm, and walk with her." "No, madam," said Marina, "I pray you let me not deprive you of your servant:" for Leonine was one of Dionysia's attendants. "Come, come," said this artful woman, who wished for a pretence to leave her alone with Leonine, "I love the prince, your father, and I love you. We every day expect your father here; and when he comes, and finds you so changed by grief from the paragon of beauty we reported you, he will think we have taken no care of you. Go, I pray you, walk, and be cheerful once again. Be careful of that excellent complexion, which stole the hearts of old and young." Marina, being thus importuned, said, "Well, I will go, but yet I have no desire to it." As Dionysia walked away, she said to Leonine, *"Remember what I have said!"*—shocking words, for their meaning was that he should remember to kill Marina.

Marina looked towards the sea, her birthplace, and said, "Is the wind westerly that blows?" "Southwest," replied Leonine. "When I was born the wind was north," said she: and then the storm and tempest, and all her father's sorrows, and her mother's death, came full into her mind; and she said, "My father, as Lychorida told me, did never fear, but cried, *Courage, good seamen,* to the sailors, galling his princely hands with the ropes, and, clasping to the mast, he endured a sea that almost split the deck." "When was this?" said Leonine. "When I was born," replied Marina: "never were wind and waves more violent;" and then she described the storm, the action of the sailors, the boatswain's whistle, and the loud call of the master, "which," said she, "trebled the confusion of the ship." Lychorida had so often recounted to Marina the story of her hapless birth that these things seemed ever present to her imagination. But here Leonine interrupted her with desiring her to say her prayers. "What mean you?" said Marina, who began to fear, she knew not why. "If you require a little space for prayer, I grant it," said Leonine; "but be not tedious, the gods are quick of ear, and I am sworn to do my work in haste." "Will you kill me?" said Marina: "alas! why?" "To satisfy my lady," replied Leonine. "Why would she have me killed?" said Marina: "now, as I can remember, I never hurt her in all my life. I never spake bad word, nor did any ill turn to any living creature. Believe me now, I never killed a mouse, nor hurt a fly. I trod upon a worm once against my will, but I wept for it. How have I offended?" The murderer replied, "My commission is not to reason on the deed, but to do it." And he was just going to kill her, when certain pirates happened to land at that very moment, who seeing Marina, bore her off as a prize to their ship.

The pirate who had made Marina his prize carried her to Mitylene, and sold her for a slave, where, though in that humble condition, Marina soon became known throughout the whole city of Mitylene for her beauty and her virtues; and the person to whom she was sold became rich by the money she earned for him. She taught music, dancing, and fine needleworks, and the money she got by her scholars she gave to her master and mistress; and the fame of her learning and her great industry came to the knowledge of Lysimachus, a young nobleman who was governor of Mitylene, and Lysimachus went himself to the house where Marina dwelt, to see this paragon of excellence, whom all the city praised so highly. Her conversation delighted Lysimachus beyond measure, for though he had heard much of this admired maiden, he did not expect to find her so sensible a lady, so virtuous, and so good, as he perceived Marina to be; and he left her, saying, he hoped she would persevere in her industrious and virtuous course, and that if ever she heard from him again it should be for her good. Lysimachus thought Marina such a miracle for sense, fine breeding, and excellent qualities, as well as for beauty and all outward graces, that he wished to marry her, and notwithstanding her humble situation, he hoped to find that her birth was noble; but ever when they asked her parentage she would sit still and weep.

Meantime, at Tarsus, Leonine, fearing the anger of Dionysia, told her he had killed Marina; and that wicked woman gave out that she was dead, and made a pretended funeral for her, and erected a stately monument; and shortly after Pericles, accompanied by his loyal minister Helicanus, made a voyage from Tyre to Tarsus, on purpose to see his daughter, intending to take her home with him: and he never having beheld her since he left her an infant in the care of Cleon and his wife, how did this good prince rejoice at the thought of seeing this dear child of his buried queen! but when they told him Marina was dead, and showed the monument they had erected for her, great was the misery this most wretched father endured, and not being able to bear the sight of that country where his last hope and only memory of his dear Thaisa was entombed, he took ship, and hastily departed from Tarsus. From the day he entered the ship a dull and heavy melancholy seized him. He never spoke, and seemed totally insensible to everything around him.

Sailing from Tarsus to Tyre, the ship in its course passed by Mitylene, where Marina dwelt; the governor of which place, Lysimachus, observing this royal vessel from the shore, and desirous of knowing who was on board, went in a barge to the side of the ship, to satisfy his curiosity. Helicanus received him very courteously and told him that the ship came from Tyre, and that they were conducting thither Pericles, their prince; "A man, sir," said Helicanus, "who has not spoken to any one these three months, nor taken any sustenance, but just to prolong his grief; it would be tedious to repeat the whole ground of his distemper, but the main springs from the loss of a beloved daughter and a wife." Lysimachus begged to see this afflicted prince, and when he beheld Pericles, he saw he had been once a goodly person, and he said to him, "Sir king, all hail, the gods preserve you, hail, royal sir!" But in vain Lysimachus spoke to him; Pericles made no answer, nor did he appear to perceive any stranger approached. And then Lysimachus bethought him of the peerless maid Marina, that haply with her sweet tongue she might win some answer from the silent prince: and with the consent of Helicanus he sent for Marina, and when she entered the ship in which her own father sat motionless with grief, they welcomed her on board as if they had known she was their princess; and they cried, "She is a gallant lady." Lysimachus was well pleased to hear their commendations, and he said, "She is such a one, that were I well assured she came of noble birth, I would wish no better choice, and think me rarely blessed in a wife." And then he addressed her in courtly terms, as if the lowly-seeming maid had been the high-born lady he wished to find her, calling her *Fair and beautiful Marina,* telling her a great prince on board that ship had fallen into a sad and mournful silence; and, as if Marina had the power of conferring health and felicity, he begged she would undertake to cure the royal stranger of his melancholy. "Sir," said Marina, "I will use my utmost skill in his recovery, provided none but I and my maid be suffered to come near him."

She, who at Mitylene had so carefully concealed her birth, ashamed to tell that one of royal ancestry was now a slave, first began to speak to Pericles of the wayward changes in her own fate, telling him from what a high estate herself had fallen. As if she had known it was her royal father she stood before, all the words she spoke were of her own sorrows; but her reason for so doing was, that she knew nothing more wins the attention of the unfortunate than the recital of some sad calamity to match their own. The sound of her sweet voice aroused the drooping prince; he lifted up his eyes, which had been so long fixed and motionless; and Marina, who was the perfect image of her mother, presented to his amazed sight the features of his dead queen. The long-silent prince was once more heard to speak. "My dearest wife," said the awakened Pericles, "was like this maid, and such a one might my daughter have been. My queen's square brows, her stature to an inch, as wand-like straight, as silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like. Where do you live, young maid? Report your parentage. I think you said you had been tossed from wrong to injury, and that you thought your griefs would equal mine, if both were opened." "Some such thing I said," replied Marina, "and said no more than what my thoughts did warrant me as likely." "Tell me your story," answered Pericles; "if I find you have known the thousandth part of my endurance, you have borne your sorrows like a man, and I have suffered like a girl; yet you do look like Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling extremity out of act. How lost you your name, my most kind virgin? Recount your story I beseech you. Come, sit by me." How was Pericles surprised when she said her name was *Marina,* for he knew it was no usual name, but had been invented by himself for his own child to signify *seaborn:* "O, I am mocked," said he, "and you are sent hither by some incensed god to make the world laugh at me." "Patience, good sir," said Marina, "or I must cease here." "Nay," said Pericles, "I will be patient; you little know how you do startle me, to call yourself Marina." "The name," she replied, "was given me by one that had some power, my father, and a king." "How, a king's daughter!" said Pericles, "and called Marina! But are you flesh and blood? Are you no fairy? Speak on; where were you born? and wherefore called Marina?" She replied, "I was called Marina, because I was born at sea. My mother was the daughter of a king; she died the minute I was born, as my good nurse Lychorida has often told me weeping. The king, my father, left me at Tarsus, till the cruel wife of Cleon sought to murder me. A crew of pirates came and rescued me, and brought me here to Mitylene. But, good sir, why do you weep? It may be, you think me an impostor. But, indeed, sir, I am the daughter to king Pericles, if good king Pericles be living." Then Pericles, terrified as he seemed at his own sudden joy, and doubtful if this could be real, loudly called for his attendants, who rejoiced at the sound of their beloved king's voice; and he said to Helicanus, "O Helicanus, strike me, give me a gash, put me to present pain, lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me, overbear the shores of my mortality. O, come hither, thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus, and found at sea again. O Helicanus, down on your knees, thank the holy gods! This is Marina. Now blessings on thee, my child! Give me fresh garments, mine own Helicanus! She is not dead at Tarsus as she should have been by the savage Dionysia. She shall tell you all, when you shall kneel to her and call her your very princess. Who is this?" (observing Lysimachus for the first time.) "Sir," said Helicanus, "it is the governor of Mitylene, who, hearing of your melancholy, came to see you." "I embrace you, sir," said Pericles. "Give me my robes! I am well with beholding — O heaven bless my girl! But hark, what music is that?"— for now, either sent by some kind god, or by his own delighted fancy deceived, he seemed to hear soft music. "My lord, I hear none," replied Helicanus. "None?" said Pericles; "why it is the music of the spheres." As there was no music to be heard, Lysimachus concluded that the sudden joy had unsettled the prince's understanding; and he said, "It is not good to cross him: let him have his way:" and then they told him they heard the music; and he now complaining of a drowsy slumber coming over him, Lysimachus persuaded him to rest on a couch, and placing a pillow under his head, he, quite overpowered with excess of joy, sank into a sound sleep, and Marina watched in silence by the couch of her sleeping parent.

While he slept, Pericles dreamed a dream which made him resolve to go to Ephesus. His dream was, that Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians, appeared to him, and commanded him to go to her temple at Ephesus, and there before her altar to declare the story of his life and misfortunes; and by her silver bow she swore, that if he performed her injunction, he should meet with some rare felicity. When he awoke, being miraculously refreshed, he told his dream, and that his resolution was to obey the bidding of the goddess.

Then Lysimachus invited Pericles to come on shore, and refresh himself with such entertainment as he should find at Mitylene, which courteous offer Pericles accepting, agreed to tarry with him for the space of a day or two. During which time we may well suppose what feastings, what rejoicings, what costly shows and entertainments the governor made in Mitylene, to greet the royal father of his dear Marina, whom in her obscure fortunes he had so respected. Nor did Pericles frown upon Lysimachus's suit, when he understood how he had honoured his child in the days of her low estate, and that Marina showed herself not averse to his proposals; only he made it a condition, before he gave his consent, that they should visit with him the shrine of the Ephesian Diana: to whose temple they shortly after all three undertook a voyage; and, the goddess herself filling their sails with prosperous winds, after a few weeks they arrived in safety at Ephesus.

There was standing near the altar of the goddess, when Pericles with his train entered the temple, the good Cerimon (now grown very aged) who had restored Thaisa, the wife of Pericles, to life; and Thaisa, now a priestess of the temple, was standing before the altar; and though the many years he had passed in sorrow for her loss had much altered Pericles, Thaisa thought she knew her husband's features, and when he approached the altar and began to speak, she remembered his voice, and listened to his words with wonder and a joyful amazement. And these were the words that Pericles spoke before the altar: "Hail, Diana! to perform thy just commands, I here confess myself the prince of Tyre, who, frighted from my country, at Pentapolis wedded the fair Thaisa: she died at sea in childbed, but brought forth a maid-child called Marina. She at Tarsus was nursed with Dionysia, who at fourteen years thought to kill her, but her better stars brought her to Mitylene, by whose shores as I sailed, her good fortunes brought this maid on board, where by her most clear remembrance she made herself known to be my daughter."

Thaisa, unable to bear the transports which his words had raised in her, cried out, "You are, you are, O royal Pericles"— and fainted. "What means this woman?" said Pericles: "she dies! gentlemen, help."—"Sir," said Cerimon, "if you have told Diana's altar true, this is your wife." "Reverend gentleman, no," said Pericles: "I threw her overboard with these very arms." Cerimon then recounted how, early one tempestuous morning, this lady was thrown upon the Ephesian shore; how, opening the coffin, he found therein rich jewels, and a paper; how, happily, he recovered her, and placed her here in Diana's temple. And now, Thaisa being restored from her swoon said, "O my lord, are you not Pericles? Like him you speak, like him you are. Did you not name a tempest, a birth, and death?" He astonished said, "The voice of dead Thaisa!" "That Thaisa am I," she replied, "supposed dead and drowned." "O true Diana!" exclaimed Pericles, in a passion of devout astonishment. "And now," said Thaisa, "I know you better. Such a ring as I see on your finger did the king my father give you, when we with tears parted from him at Pentapolis." "Enough, you gods!" cried Pericles, "your present kindness makes my past miseries sport. O come, Thaisa, be buried a second time within these arms."

And Marina said, "My heart leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom." Then did Pericles show his daughter to her mother, saying, "Look who kneels here, flesh of thy flesh, thy burthen at sea, and called Marina, because she was yielded there." "Blessed and my own!" said Thaisa: and while she hung in rapturous joy over her child, Pericles knelt before the altar, saying, "Pure Diana, bless thee for thy vision. For this, I will offer oblations nightly to thee." And then and there did Pericles, with the consent of Thaisa, solemnly affiance their daughter, the virtuous Marina, to the well-deserving Lysimachus in marriage.

Thus have we seen in Pericles, his queen, and daughter, a famous example of virtue assailed by calamity (through the sufferance of Heaven, to teach patience and constancy to men), under the same guidance becoming finally successful, and triumphing over chance and change. In Helicanus we have beheld a notable pattern of truth, of faith, and loyalty, who, when he might have succeeded to a throne, chose rather to recall the rightful owner to his possession, than to become great by another's wrong. In the worthy Cerimon, who restored Thaisa to life, we are instructed how goodness directed by knowledge, in bestowing benefits upon mankind, approaches to the nature of the gods. It only remains to be told, that Dionysia, the wicked wife of Cleon, met with an end proportionable to her deserts; the inhabitants of Tarsus, when her cruel attempt upon Marina was known, rising in a body to revenge the daughter of their benefactor, and setting fire to the palace of Cleon, burnt both him and her, and their whole household: the gods seeming well pleased, that so foul a murder, though but intentional, and never carried into act, should be punished in a way befitting its enormity.

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE

BY

CLAYTON EDWARDS

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

IN Windsor there dwelt the fat knight, Sir John Falstaff, of such girth and portliness that two wenches with joined hands could hardly have encircled him — a lord of thieves, a mountain of rascality, who lodged at the Garter Inn, drinking huge bowls of sack and ale, sending his cut-purse servants on dishonest errands. This knight, in seeking how to obtain the gold of other and worthier persons than himself, hit on the plan of making love to Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, the wives of two wealthy gentlemen of Windsor, who, ruling their husband's coffers, should become to him, so he said, his East and West Indies; while he, trading to both, should line his pockets with their gold. And Falstaff had the temerity to send his page, Robin, with love letters to each of the two ladies, wherein he expressed himself most ardently, signing himself, *thine own true knight, for thee to fight, John Falstaff.*

Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, who were close friends, were used to sup and dine together with their husbands and followers at the house of one or the other as chance might find them; to visit and make merry at all hours, and to share in common many jests and secrets. No sooner, therefore, did Mistress Page receive Sir John's epistle, than in wonder, and torn between anger and merriment, she hastened toward the house of Mistress Ford.

" Have I," said she, " escaped love letters in the holiday time of my beauty to be a subject for them now? Why the man hath not been thrice in my company! What should I say to him? I'll exhibit a bill in parliament for the putting down of men! "

While speaking in this manner, she came on Mistress Ford hastening in the opposite direction, who cried out on seeing her and thrust into her hand a letter, bidding her to read at once and perceive how she might be knighted. It was, said she, a marvellous insult, marvellously writ: she would think the worse of fat men all her life in consequence, and Mistress Page read:

"Ask me no reason why I love you, for though love use reason for his physician he admits him not for his counsellor. You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy; you are merry, so am I; ha, ha! then there's more sympathy; you love sack and so do I; would you desire better sympathy? let it suffice thee, Mistress Ford, that I love thee.

Thine own true knight
By day or night
Or any kind of light.
With all his might
For thee to fight,
John Falstaff."

"Letter for letter!" exclaimed Mistress Page. "For your comfort, here's the twin brother of your letter. I warrant he has a thousand of them writ with blank space for different names!" And she cried out on the unweighed behaviour that this Flemish drunkard, as she called Falstaff, had picked, with the devil's name, out of their conversation; for otherwise, said she, never would he have dared insult them in such manner.

These ladies, although light-hearted, were as virtuous as Sir John imagined them to be false, and his message justly incensed them: not only on account of its ill-chosen love-making, but because with natural vanity they liked but ill to receive such sallies from one who was old and fat, a drunkard, given to dishonest practices, thieving and other forms of wickedness. They determined, therefore, to chastise Sir John most roundly for his insolence, conceiving a vengeance by which they could not only punish him, but gratify their mirth in so doing.

In pursuance of their plan, they dispatched to him one Mistress Quickly for their messenger, a feather-brained woman who delighted in such importance, who told Sir John that Mistress Ford sent him a thousand thanks and bade him visit her the next day between ten and eleven, when her husband would be from home. Never, said Mistress Quickly, was a lady brought to such a state of mind before. How Sir John had accomplished it was wonderful and past belief. Surely he must have charms, said she, for there had been knights, lords and fine gentlemen in coaches, letter after letter, gift after gift, with silk and gold, all perfumed sweetly, smelling of musk — the fairest, indeed, to win the heart of any woman,— and yet they could never so much as win an eye-wink from Mistress Ford. And Mistress Page, who was as virtuous a civil, modest wife as lived in Windsor, and would never miss Sir John in morning or evening prayer, did likewise dote upon him, and gave him to know that her husband seldom was from home,— but she hoped there would soon come a time.

Falstaff, in his conceit, believed that he had actually encompassed these two wives,— that in spite of husbands, wealth and families they intended to bestow themselves upon him. He bade Mistress Quickly commend him to them both (although on no account should either learn of his dealings with the other) and he prepared to meet Mistress Ford at the appointed hour.

Now Falstaff was beset with other dangers than were intended for him by the wives whose virtues he had thus attempted; for being, as he said, out at heels, forced of necessity to shift and thieve, he had discharged his three servants without paying them a single penny of their wages, bidding them, if they would thrive, to go and steal as he himself was forced to do — and in revenge these had borne his plans to Master Ford and Master Page.

Master Page was of an easy nature and trusted in his wife. He said that he would turn her loose to Falstaff, warranting that worthy would receive only sharp words; but Ford was of jealous temper and believed Page to be a fool who stood on his wife's frailty. For his own part, he said, he would be loath to turn them together. A man could be too confident. He liked it none the better that the news had come from Falstaff's cast-off servants; and to Falstaff, therefore, the jealous husband came in a disguise under the assumed name of Master Brook, with a trumped-up tale to the effect that he had long loved Mistress Ford from afar, bestowed much on her, followed her with a doting observance and engrossed opportunities to meet her. Not only had he brought presents to her, said Ford, but had given largely to many to know what gifts would please her best — all of which was to no purpose, for as she would have none of him, his love was like a fair house built on another man's ground, lost in mistaking the place of its erection.

"To what purpose," said Falstaff, "have you unfolded this to me?"

"When I have told you that I have told you all," replied Ford. "The heart of my purpose is this: that you, Sir John, who are so skillful in the art of wooing, so famous for your warlike, courtlike, and learned demeanour, may win her love."

With detection in his hand, the disguised husband asserted that he could drive this lady from the ward of her purity, her reputation and her marriage vow, which at the time were too strongly embattled against him.

When the supposed Master Brook told Falstaff that he should want no money for his pains, the knight, thoroughly deceived, cried out: "And you, Master Brook, shall want no Mistress Ford! I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment; even as you came to me, her assistant or go-between parted from me. I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven, for at that time the jealous, rascally knave, her husband, will be forth."

"Were it not well," said Ford, dissembling his anger, "that you knew this gentleman when you saw him to avoid him in the future?"

"Let him be hanged for a salt-butter rogue!" cried Falstaff. "I will stare him out of his wits. I will awe him with my cudgel," and the rascal heaped a torrent of abuse upon this jealous husband, saying that the cowardly ruffian's wife should become the key to her husband's coffers, where he, Falstaff, should find his harvest-home.

When Ford heard Falstaff speak in this fashion, not only bragging of his purpose, but calling him numberless villainous names, he was beside himself with passion, and determined to enter his house with armed servants and cudgel-bearers at the time when the false knight would be present; for now aware of Falstaff's plans, and the hour of their execution, Ford proposed to punish him most soundly, uncover the treachery of his own wife, pluck the veil of modesty from Mistress Page and laugh at her husband for his fancied security.

So, between the hours of ten and eleven, Master Ford with neighbours and servants, armed with pistols, whips and cudgels made an onslaught on his home.

Strangely enough, however, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page in following their design on Falstaff, had proposed to frighten him by saying that this very thing would happen; they had provided for the fat knight a hiding place in a basket of foul linen, and servants were to bear this forth on their shoulders, and empty it in the muddy ditch close by the riverside.

While Master Ford and his followers drew near his house, Falstaff had already entered there. He called Mistress Ford his heavenly jewel and cried out upon that blessed hour, which was the period of his ambition. He said that he could not prate and say that she was this and that, like many of those lisping, hawthorn-buds who came like women in men's apparel, but none the less he loved her, none but she, and she deserved it of him. But Falstaff before long was forced to conceal himself, for Mistress Page came to the door, crying out that Master Ford with half Windsor at his heels was come to search the house, and pray heaven, said she, there was no one concealed there, or else were Mistress Ford undone indeed!

"Nay, but there is," said Mistress Ford, exclaiming in apparent terror, "a gentleman, my own dear friend, and I fear not my disgrace so much as his great peril. I had rather than a thousand pounds he were out of the house!"

"For shame," cried Mistress Page, "never stand and say 'you had rather' now! Your husband's here at hand! Bethink you, woman, of some conveyance! Look, here is a basket, let him creep in here! Throw linen on him, and send him by two men to Datchet Mead!"

Mistress Ford replied that her friend was too big by far to go in there; but Falstaff, in fear for his life, plunged from behind the curtain, bellowing like a bull and crying out to her to follow her friend's counsel. He clambered into the basket, was covered with foul linen and borne away toward the ditch by serving-men, while Ford and his followers burst into the house, ransacked closets, chests and clothes-press, and even discharged their firearms up the chimney in hopes the knight had taken refuge there.

The two dames, however, were not yet done with Falstaff, and gave him to know through the same messenger, Mistress Quickly, that they were heartily sorry for the mischance that had befallen him; and Mistress Ford appointed a second meeting with Sir John, when further mischief was to be worked upon him.

But Ford had wondered greatly why his plans had gone amiss, and in disguise a second time, still under the name of Master Brook, he went again to Falstaff who imparted to him all his misadventures — how he had been carried and ducked in the name of foul clothes at Datchet Lane, crying out for Master Brook to think of it, to be half-stewed in grease like a Dutch dish and then to be thrown into the Thames, glowing hot, and cooled in that surge like a horseshoe!

Ford said that he was in truth sorry Sir John had suffered so greatly for his sake. His suit, he feared, was desperate. Assuredly no one even so brave and valiant as Falstaff would undertake Mistress Ford after such a reception. But Falstaff cried that he would be thrown into Etna as he had been into the Thames ere he would leave her thus. He had received, said he, another embassy of meeting; the hour was betwixt eight and nine; he would even then address him to his appointment; and Ford, with the vow that this time Falstaff should not escape him, summoned once again his friends and retainers and prepared for a second time to invade his house.

When Ford arrived, he beheld the basket that had concealed Falstaff so successfully on the day previous, for Mistress Ford had slyly bidden her servants to carry it forth again, in the hope that her husband would believe the knight a second time hidden within it; and Ford bade the servants set it down, shouting for Falstaff to come forth, and scattered the linen about the room to no other purpose than confusion. For Mistress Ford had disguised Sir John as the famous fat woman of Brentford, an old witch whom Ford had promised roundly to cudgel if ever she came within his house; and when Ford beheld this amazing figure, which he would have detected had his anger been less violent (for Falstaff's beard showed plainly beneath the veil about his head) he called Falstaff hag, witch and runyon, cudgelled him soundly, and with hand and foot thrust him from the door, proceeding then to search for him he had just ousted, while his wife and Mistress Page were overcome with merriment.

The two dames then made known to their husbands what they had done, and Ford and Page were greatly astonished and laughed heartily at the sorry plight in which the poor, unvirtuous, fat knight had placed himself through his affections. Master Ford said that he would never mistrust his wife again — she should stand in future as a precious emblem of constancy and wifely virtues. They all decided, however, that the jest would have no period if Falstaff were not publicly disgraced, proposing to shame him openly in the presence of their friends and neighbours, and for this purpose they conceived the plan of luring him to a nearby forest said to be enchanted, where their children, dressed as fairies, should swarm upon him, pinch him and burn him with tapers, until the rest should disclose themselves and mock him back to Windsor.

Among the young people who were to aid them in this jest, was Mistress Page's daughter Anne, of sufficient dowry and appearance to be desired in marriage by all the young and many of the older men of Windsor; and her mother in this design on Falstaff had a secret purpose, for she intended that Anne Page should be disguised in such a manner that a French doctor, whom she desired for a son-in-law, should recognize the garments and steal Anne away secretly to be married. Master Page bore this doctor little love and never in the world would have consented to such an alliance. He proposed that his daughter should marry a simple but wealthy youth named Slender, whose fortune he desired to be united with his own acres, and Master Page prepared to force his daughter to wed Slender, who was utterly a fool and who possessed no grace save that of wealth to recommend him as a husband.

Master Page was well aware of the opportunity this jest would give him, for he also intended Anne to be dressed in a certain manner, when, on a password, Slender was to lead her to the vicarage and marry her there.

To both her father and her mother Anne Page promised due obedience, but she intended to deceive them both. She loved neither of the suitors chosen for her, and had, indeed, given her word and her affections to a youth named Fenton. Boys, disguised in the dresses that had been prepared with such secrecy, were to aid her in her purpose by stealing away with the unwelcome suitors, while the two lovers intended to hasten before a priest, be wedded in a trice, and return to beg the pardon of the parents who were so grossly to be deceived.

With these cross purposes to outwit one another, joined only in the coming trick on Falstaff, the whole party repaired to the forest oak — the meeting place chosen by the two wives for the completion of what they intended.

Falstaff entered and beheld only Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, for the others had all concealed themselves; and with absurd expressions he commenced once more to woo them, shouting that the sky might rain potatoes and thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves ere he would be driven for a third time from their company.

The children, dressed as fairies, then swarmed from their concealment and surrounded him, while the two dames fled in apparent terror; and Falstaff roared in fear and fell upon his face for he believed these apparitions to be no other than uncanny sprites and goblins who had come to torment him. The supposed fairies worked their will on him, pinching him and burning his fingers with their tapers, until Page, Ford, their wives and neighbours came forward with gales of laughter to mock Falstaff, who sat up and stared about him with so dazed and bewildered an expression that merriment was doubled at the sight of him.

Then Mistress Ford and Mistress Page in round words gave Falstaff to know how they regarded him — whom the devil himself, they said, could not have made them love, were they resolved to thrust virtue from their doors by head and shoulders. And their neighbours and husbands vied with each other in contriving names for Falstaff and his roguery. They called him a hodge-pudding, a bag of flax, a puffed man, one that was as slanderous as Satan, and as poor as Job; and they united in ridiculing him until he bade them use him as they would, he was dejected.

"And yet be cheerful, knight," said Master Page, "thou shall eat posset to-night at my house; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife who now laughs at thee. Tell her that Master Slender hath married my daughter."

As he spoke, however, young Slender entered, crying out that the one he took to be Anne Page was a great lubberly boy; — and the French doctor likewise burst upon them shouting he had been deceived and wedded to a country bumpkin.

At that moment, when all were wondering greatly what had become of the right bride and who had married her, Anne Page and Master Fenton entered and implored forgiveness, while Falstaff, who began to recover his spirits, rejoiced loudly that those who came to mock at him were themselves deceived even as he had been, and he cried out that he was glad their arrows had glanced.

This remark put Master Page and his wife in better mind. They were unwilling to take their ill fortune in worse part than the knight himself; they gave their daughter forgiveness, saying that her husband who could not be cast off should be embraced; and Mistress

Page bade every one of them, Sir John and the rest, to return and laugh the sport o'er by a country fire,— for Falstaff, by the good humour with which he had borne his misfortunes, was in part forgiven by them all.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

KING FERDINAND of Navarre, when a young man, although fond of pleasure and good company and blessed with an easy light-hearted disposition, was possessed of thoughts beyond his years that caused him to consider all amusements wherein young men take delight as vanities suited only to the state of fools. As Ferdinand himself was not averse to these amusements but secretly delighted in them, he grew to detest himself for enjoying natural pleasures. Whenever he spent a night with jovial companions, or joined a hunting party, or whispered a pleasing conversation with some fair lady of his court, he would repent afterward of his idle and light behaviour; and longing to become famous, he resolved to devote his days to serious study and his nights to meditation, until he should acquire the name of a great scholar.

For the purpose of pursuing his studies without fear of interruption, the foolish, but ambitious Ferdinand resolved to turn his pleasant court for three years' time into a silent hermitage. All sports and pleasures were to be forbidden under pain of severe punishment; no men save those that came on grave and learned errands were to be admitted to his presence. As for women, who distracted the mind with holiday and giddy humours and were enemies to knowledge, Ferdinand swore that none should come within a mile of his royal palace. He imposed a dreadful penalty on any transgressor of this order, commanding that she lose her tongue — for the young king believed that no woman could conceive of any fate more terrible than to be deprived of her power of speech. And Ferdinand prepared to pass away from joy and all his royal pursuits, to forego his feasts, his friends, and his entertainments, all which, he said, he would find in sweeter guise in learned hours with his books and in the delights of a true scholar.

Ferdinand had invited three of his own courtiers, whose names were Biron, Dumain and Longaville to share with him this monstrous period of study and to undergo the same severe rules of conduct that he had imposed upon himself. His invitation was, indeed, in the nature of a royal command that the lords whom he had chosen could not well disobey. Ferdinand spoke to them in high-sounding words about the sovereign virtues of fame, that all men, as he said, hunt for in their lives, to grace themselves, in the disgrace of death, with the hope that their fair deeds shall blunt Time's edge and make them heirs of all eternity.

" Great conquerors," said Ferdinand, " for so you are, who overcome your affections and war against the huge army of the world's desires, in this paper are set forth all the strict laws that you have sworn to observe in living with me as fellow-scholars. You must now sign your names, and may honour be forever lost by him who violates the smallest particle of what is written here! "

" I am content," said Longaville, " the mind shall banquet though the body pine. The fast is, after all, for but three years, and three years soon are ended."

" For my part," said Dumain, " away with the world's delights! Farewell to love and merry-making! I shall find them in philosophy." But Biron, who was the most light-hearted of the three, disliked exceedingly to forego his customary pleasures for so long a period of time. Biron was fond of dancing and merry-making, he liked the feasts that Ferdinand had now forbidden, and few were better thought of by fair ladies than this madcap lord, who now must forego their society. Biron was withal more honest than his fellows, and he said to Ferdinand, " my liege, I have sworn to live and study here for three years' time, but there are other strict observances that I confess I do not love. To fast one day in every week and eat only one meal on every day beside, is a barren task, too hard to keep.— To sleep but three hours every night and not be seen to wink from morn to eve, will weary out our eyes with constant vigil. Far more willingly would I sleep all night and make a dark night too of half the day! And last, your Majesty, to see no woman! If I did swear to that, I swore only in jest." Biron then gave many excellent arguments against the studies that the king proposed to enter, saying that plodders won no more than base authority from others' books, and that they who could name all the stars in heaven, had no more profit of their shining than ignorant, but happy men, who walked abroad beneath their light, not knowing what they were. Biron spoke with such excellent sense and wisdom in defending idleness and the pleasures that he was unwilling to give over, that the king cried out, "How well is he read to reason so wisely against reading!" and said that Biron's speech proved plainly that he had devoted himself to the very books that he pretended to despise. The king said also with some show of displeasure, "Biron, you may go and leave us. I release you from your vow. We will have no unwilling scholars, no reluctant disciples in our search for truth. As for you, my lords Dumain and Longaville, we will now proceed to our high purposes and commence our solemn fast."

"No, my good lord," said Biron, "although I have spoken more for pleasure and ignorance than you can say for knowledge, yet will I stay with you, abide by my oath and keep the most severe penance of you all." He then asked the king to give him the paper, saying that he would sign to all the strict decrees that it contained.

When Biron read the schedule that the king with great labour had prepared, he saw there the article that any who might be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years should endure public shame and severe punishment.

"This article, my lord," said Biron "you yourself must break, for the princess of France, as you well know, is coming hither in embassy to speak with you about the surrender of the province of Aquitaine. She is a maid of grace and complete majesty. Either you must forego your oath, or the admired princess vainly comes to see you."

The king was greatly concerned at what Biron told him.

"This was quite forgotten," said he. "My lords, what do you say? We must of force do away with our decree, and strong necessity compels us to break our vow." But the king decided that although he must converse with this foreign princess, still he would not allow her in his court. She must be lodged before his gates and treated, although with respect, more as if she had come to besiege his palace than on a friendly errand; and the king with Dumain and Longaville lamented the miscarriage of his plans, but Biron rejoiced openly in what had befallen. Biron said to himself, "I'll wager my head to any good man's hat these oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn and that the dames of France will laugh at us. However, be it so! For the sooner the king, my master, sees his folly, the better for us all." For, although Biron had resolved to keep his oath as long as any of the others, he hoped that this would not be long, and that the princess with her ladies would soon put to flight King Ferdinand's severe design. Ferdinand with his three lords then prepared to greet the princess who so seriously had shaken his intentions.

There were with the princess three merry ladies named Katharine, Maria and Rosaline, to whom by some strange chance the three fellow scholars of King Ferdinand were known. When the princess, who had heard of the king's strange vow, desired to know about his "book-men," as she laughingly termed his followers, each of her three ladies spoke of the lord that she particularly admired, praising him above all others until the princess said, "What does this mean? Are my ladies all in love with these stupid fellows that have forsworn the society of women?" And when the princess learned that the king would not admit her to his court, but determined to lodge her in the open fields, she was greatly annoyed and cried out that Ferdinand ought to be punished for such an oath, which was, she said, a sin to break but a far more deadly sin to keep. When the king came forward to greet her, the princess, therefore, received him coldly and listened to his excuses for her poor reception with a show of great displeasure.

But it was to be remarked that while King Ferdinand was speaking with the princess, each of his three lords had singled out that particular lady who had praised him to her mistress — Longaville conversed with Maria, Dumain sought Katharine, while Biron engaged in sprightly conversation with Rosaline, whose wit was as keen as his own and who vanquished him completely in the encounter of words that soon arose between them. When Biron, about to take his farewell, wished her happiness and many lovers, she said tartly, "Amen, so you be none!" and left him to retire with the king his master. And indeed the king had come off but little better from his argument with the princess, who, although she did not dare to treat him with the incivility that Rosaline had shown to Biron, none the less had proved him in the wrong about the matters of state, whereon she came to visit him.

The king with his three followers then returned into his court to study, telling the princess he would visit her again ere she departed; but misfortune had indeed befallen Ferdinand's stern purpose to become a hermit, for he had now fallen in love with the French princess and his lords had likewise become the willing slaves of her three attendants. Most of all was Biron smitten by the charms of the beautiful and discourteous lady, Rosaline.

Now was the toilful gaze of the great student changed to the ardent and despairing glance of the devoted lover, and now the minds of Ferdinand and his three lords were charged with thoughts far different from their former longings after fame. Undying fame they would have willingly exchanged for favour in their ladies' eyes, and they spent their time devising poems to meet the graces of their several paragons, seeking lonely places there to read what they had written, and exclaiming to the moon and stars upon the virtues of their loves. But although they had fallen so deeply into the toils of the princess and her attendant women, no one of them knew that any save himself was thus afflicted, for by assuming a more serious manner and a greater interest in the books that he now hated, each of them contrived to deceive the rest. To all appearance, Ferdinand and his three lords were never more devoted to their studies, never more firm in their resolve to banish vain delights and worldly pleasures than now, when they secretly desired to do away with books and go a-courting to the ladies of France.

Biron composed a letter that he addressed *"to the snow white hand of the beauteous lady Rosaline,"* and being unable to visit her except in the company of the king, and desiring greatly that Rosaline receive this letter before the meeting that would take place on the day following, Biron disregarded all his vows and engaged a stupid clown to be his messenger to Rosaline. For Biron knew this clown, whose name was Costard, to be a fellow of such small wit that he would never give a thought upon his errand, which the faithless Biron desired well to be kept secret from his royal master.

There was at the royal court a Spanish nobleman, Don Adriano de Armado, a fellow as conceited as his name was long, as proud as a peacock and as flighty as a weather-vane. The king had retained this nobleman partly for the purpose of a jester, believing that Armado, as they called him, could afford them with all necessary amusement in the time of their retirement. For Armado would relate many a proud tale of knights and noblemen of tawny Spain, and was, moreover, given to the most absurd expressions of English, using great words and pompous language that never failed to awaken laughter in all that heard him.

Armado likewise had been forbidden to converse with any woman for three years, but as if to complete the confusion in Ferdinand's affairs, he had fallen in love with Jaquenetta, the dairymaid to the royal palace, and had himself written a love letter that set forth in high flown phrases Jaquenetta's charms, which were marvellous to his eyes. An imp of misfortune then caused Armado to give this letter for delivery to Costard, the same clown that Biron employed as a messenger to Rosaline. Armado bade him bear it to Jaquenetta, who was the light of all men's souls and the heart of their desire; he gave to the clown a penny and a farthing, said that it was a generous sum, and bade him to bring word presently of the letter's safe delivery.

The two letters were alike, and the clown could not hope to read the one from the other. So it was no more than natural that he should bear Armado's letter to Rosaline, while the loving words of Biron fell into the hands of Jaquenetta.

Jaquenetta lost no time in telling of the treasure that had befallen her, and when her tale came to the ears of a certain school-master who knew of the king's oath, he ordered her to deliver the letter immediately to Ferdinand; and Jaquenetta with Costard to accompany her set forth in search of him. For Ferdinand was not at his study, and none could tell of his whereabouts.

The unaccustomed absence of King Ferdinand from the grave halls of his palace was easily explained. The king had composed a marvellous poem, a sonnet to the French princess, and had retired to a remote part of his park where he could read it at his leisure. The king delighted in exclaiming upon her virtues and in the lack of other hearers, took pleasure in reading his poems in the seclusion of his forest, with none but silent trees or occasional spotted deer to be his listeners. And while Costard sought for Ferdinand, he was wandering in the park with many sighs, exclaiming to the empty air upon the virtues of his mistress.

It happened that while the king thus sought retirement, Biron also was strolling in the park. Not knowing of the mischief that had befallen his letter, he was happy in the thought that even then Rosaline was reading the expressions of his love. And Biron beheld the king, who walked as in a dream, approaching; and he saw in the king's hand a written paper, from which the king recited with great fervor.

"What can this mean," thought Biron. "Is he in love? That is beyond my wildest hope. Shot, by Heaven! Cupid has thumped him with his bird-bolt! I will hide behind a tree and hear it all." Biron concealed himself, while the king, who knew not of his presence, went on with his reading. And the king had indeed written a sonnet that was pleasant to hear, saying that the golden sun gave not so sweet a kiss to the fresh, morning dew upon the rose as did the eyebeams of his mistress, when they kissed the dew of tears that wet his cheeks. He compared the princess to the gleaming moon, and said that every tear he shed for love of her was like a coach that bore her gracious image. Many other pretty sayings were in the sonnet that Biron could not help admiring, even while he laughed at the king for composing it.

"O queen of queens," sighed Ferdinand, "how far do you excel my written words! You are fairer than the tongue of man can tell. No thought can think upon your marvellous beauty. How may you know my griefs? I will drop this paper here, where the sweet leaves will shade its folly; and here, if Love is kind, you will discover it."

But when the king prepared to lay his poem upon the moss and leaves that covered the forest ground, a sudden noise arrested his attention, and glancing about he beheld — not Biron, but Longaville, who likewise bore a paper that he read aloud as he made his way through the thicket. And the king, who saw that Longaville was in the same plight as himself, was happy in this proof of his friend's inconstancy. "O sweet fellowship in shame!" whispered the king. "I rejoice, Longaville, that you too have fallen into disgrace. Here will I hide and listen to the outpouring of your love." The king, like Biron, then concealed himself, while the ardent words of Longaville in praise of his dear mistress seemed to burn upon the air. For Longaville had composed a sonnet fully as loving as Ferdinand's.

Dumain was now the only one of Ferdinand's companions who had not revealed the state of his affections, and it seemed as if some mocking forest spirit had contrived this scene of disclosure, for by strange chance Dumain also was in the park, and now was guided to the spot where Ferdinand, Biron and Longaville were assembled. Here Dumain likewise gave instant proof of inconstancy to his sworn promise, but of undying faith to his beloved lady, exclaiming on her eyes, her hair, her features; and reading a dainty poem in praise of all these glories. And Dumain, who believed that he was utterly alone (for Longaville had hidden like the rest) cried out, "O would that the king, Biron and Longaville were lovers too! Then I should be free from fault, for if all loved alike, none would offend; and then we might release ourselves from all these dreary vows."

At these words, Longaville stepped forth from behind his tree and approached Dumain with an expression of great scorn upon his face. "Your love is far from charity, Dumain," said he. "I have heard every word of your great guiltiness. Believe me, Sir, I should blush to be caught napping as you have been."

Before Longaville could accuse him further, the king also came from his place of concealment, secretly rejoicing, and the king feigned great anger at Longaville's hypocrisy, gazing upon his two guilty-loving comrades with severe displeasure. "Come, Sir," said the king, "I perceive that you are blushing. You offend twice as much as Dumain in chiding at him. For shame, Longaville — you who have laid your folded arms athwart your bosom to keep down your heart! I heard your guilty rhymes and noted well the passion of you both. You are equal in your love. 'Ay me!' says one, 'O Jove!' the other cries! What will Biron say when he hears of this? How will he spend his wit upon you! How he will triumph, leap and laugh at both of you! I would not have him know so much of me for all the world!"

"Now," cried Biron, "do I step forth to whip hypocrisy!" And while the king in guilty fear turned sharply at the sound of his voice, Biron, with a malicious smile upon his face, advanced in triumph, treading as if on air in his great joy to have learned the secrets of his companions. "My lord," said Biron to the king, "how do you dare to chide these worms for loving — you who are the most in love? Your eyes do make no *coaches?* No princess that we know of is treasured in your tears? Oh, what a scene of foolery have I beheld! With what strict patience have I lain here to see a king transformed into a gnat, and Solomon and Nestor both at play like idle school boys!" Biron, who could talk no more for mirth, commenced to laugh until the forest rang with the most unwelcome merriment that Ferdinand had ever heard.

"Your jest is too bitter," said Ferdinand sourly. "We have been betrayed to you."

"Not so," said Biron, "it is I that have been betrayed. I that am honest; I that hold it sin to break my vow; — for when shall you see *me* write a thing in rhyme, or groan for love, or waste my time before a mirror in bedecking myself? Oh, I am betrayed indeed from my deep studies by inconstant men unworthy of my fellowship!"

As Biron spoke, he blessed his lucky stars that he had been the first upon the spot, and as his joy increased that none had discovered him, he indulged in even heavier blame upon the unhappy king and his shamefaced companions. But if Biron even for an instant had averted the triumphant gaze that he fixed upon them, he would have beheld Jaquenetta and Costard drawing near among the trees; and Costard held in his hand the tell-tale letter that Biron had given him for Rosaline.

Costard gave this letter to the king, who, as yet unaware of what it contained, handed it to Biron, commanding him to read it in the presence of them all. And when Biron beheld his own letter he became crimson, and tore it into fragments, that he scattered on the ground.

"How now," said Ferdinand, "why do you destroy it?"

"It is a matter of no consequence," said Biron, "unworthy of an instant's attention."

"Of that we will make sure," replied the king; and Longaville, who gathered up the fragments, saw that they were in Biron's writing and even read Biron's name on one of them.

When the king, Dumain and Longaville fixed questioning and suspicious glances upon Biron, they remarked his high colour and the confusion of his manner, and Biron, who knew that he could not hope to deceive them further, cried out, "Guilty, my lord, guilty! I confess. You three fools lacked me to make the company. We are all pick-purses in love, and we deserve to die." Bidding Costard and Jaquenetta to begone, Biron then exclaimed, "Let us embrace! Young blood will not obey an old decree, and we are all forsworn together."

"What," said the king, who even now could not comprehend what had befallen, "did these torn lines show some love of yours?"

"Did they, do you ask?" said Biron. "Who can refrain from loving that sees the heavenly Rosaline? What eagle-sighted eye can look upon her and remain unblinded by her majesty!"

When the king heard Biron praise his mistress in so extravagant a fashion, he thought no more about his broken vow, and felt no emotion save anger that Biron should exalt the lady Rosaline above his own dear princess.

"What mistaken fury has inspired you now?" said the king. "My love, the princess, is a gracious moon and Rosaline but an attendant star, scarce seen in her great glory. Truly love has made you blind and you know not what you speak!" And the recreant scholars one and all began to praise the ladies of their affections, arguing with each other in no uncertain terms as to their merits. The king said that Rosaline was as black as ebony (she being a trifle dark of her complexion) and Biron answered that the princess dared not stand in the rain for fear her colours should be washed away. Each of them said he knew not how the other could hold vile stuff so dear, and the dispute grew hot between them until the king said, "Come, enough! We are agreed that we love these ladies. Biron now must prove our loving to be lawful and in accordance with our oath." So Biron then commenced a lengthy speech to ease their wounded consciences, and he spoke even more wisely in defense of what they had done than he had argued against learning when they were prepared to enter their studies.

Strengthened in heart, the king and his companions then resolved to woo and win the ladies that they loved. They sent them costly gifts of jewels and determined to visit them disguised and offer them some merry entertainment. And the king and his companions prepared to bend their utmost energy to courting the fair ladies that had worked so great confusion among them.

The princess, however, and her attendants had learned of the king's purpose, and knew likewise from the gifts that had been sent them that they were high in the affections of Ferdinand and his three noblemen. They were still angry, however, at the way these lords had welcomed them, and thought also that Ferdinand and his fellow-scholars should all be punished for so idly breaking the deep vows that they had sworn together. They planned, therefore, to receive the lovers coldly, to treat them with disdain and lack of courtesy until they should be made bitterly to repent the utter folly of their light behaviour.

To add a relish to their jest, and to humiliate Ferdinand and his followers even more thoroughly, the ladies conceived the plan of dressing all alike and wearing masks so that the king and his companions could not tell the one from the other; and they cleverly exchanged the jewels that had been sent them, so that Rosaline wore the token that the king had given to her mistress, while the princess wore the string of pearls that Biron had presented to Rosaline. Maria and Katharine having also exchanged gifts, the deception was complete; and when the king and his three lords came before them, Biron addressed the princess in most ardent terms of true affection, the king and Rosaline conversed apart, while Dumain and Longaville likewise mistook each other's mistresses, and devoted their conversation to the wrong ladies, who were in great difficulty to restrain their merriment. And the ladies treated the king and his followers with such keen jests and biting wit that they were forced soon to retire, returning in their own costumes the better to pursue their purposes.

Then the princess and her ladies in no uncertain words gave the discomfited lords to know how they considered men that would so lightly perjure themselves to win their brides; but being, no doubt, a trifle pleased at their complete victory, and as the king and his followers, in spite of their shortcomings, were very eligible suitors, the ladies agreed to marry them a year and a day thence. They imposed on them, however, a most severe penalty; for until the day of the weddings, the king and his followers must continue in their fasts and studies. And the keen-witted Rosaline added even another penance that her lover must perform. For Biron, whose excessive merriment was distasteful to her, must spend his time in cheering up the heavy spirits of the sick, and jest for a whole year at the bedsides of the unfortunate.

When the French ladies had departed, Ferdinand and his three lords addressed themselves with right good will to the tasks that had been laid upon them. The princess and her ladies in high good humour returned to France and without doubt the king and his followers appeared there in due course of time, to marry them.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

THE ancient city of Troy had been besieged for seven years by the Greek kings, who had come with their bravest soldiers and most terrible engines of war to overthrow the Trojan state. The object of this war was to revenge a wrong done to Menelaus, the king of Sparta, by a Trojan prince named Paris — for Paris had persuaded Helen, the beautiful wife of Menelaus, to fly from her husband into Troy, where the Trojans barred their gates against Menelaus who came in pursuit of her. The Trojans not only had refused to admit Menelaus, but to give up Helen who remained in their city with Paris. Menelaus had vowed vengeance, and assembling the other kings of Greece prepared with them to capture Helen if they levelled Troy to the ground in taking her.

Hence it was that a terrible and bloody war had raged between the Trojans and the Greeks with varying fortunes, for the Trojans who were as brave as their besiegers not only kept the Greeks from their ramparts, but did battle with them on equal terms without the city gates; while the Greeks on their part could not be driven to their ships, or compelled to abandon the grim siege with which they had invested Troy.

But the Greeks, who came from different kingdoms, in the way of such allies were prone to jealousy of each other and therefore did not fight with the complete and undivided power that they might have directed against their enemies. A quarrel among them had caused their most famous warrior, Achilles, to retire in anger from the conflict, telling the others that for his part, the war was ended and that the Trojans might drive them all into the sea before he would draw sword again. While the Greeks were thus compelled to fight without their mightiest soldier, Achilles lay idly in his tent, listening to his boy friend, Patroclus, whom he caused to imitate, one after one, the Greek commanders, shouting with laughter as Patroclus, with scornful mimicry, would act to him the aged leader, Nestor, or the proud Agamemnon, or the crafty, scheming Ulysses, or the blockhead, Ajax; and in this idleness of Achilles the Greeks commenced to lose heart, until it seemed as though without his aid the Trojans must sooner or later be victorious.

The Trojans, on the other hand, possessed a hero as terrible as Achilles and of a spirit far more noble. The name of this chief was Hector. With Paris he was son to Priam, the Trojan king. But Hector was mightier by far than Paris, or, indeed, than any of his brothers, although the Trojans hoped that one day, Troilus, their youngest prince, would become as great as Hector. So strong a warrior was Hector, so skilled in every form of war, withal of a nature wise and temperate, that he became the chief pillar and support of his beleaguered city. And Hector, who was so brave a soldier that the meaning of the word fear was unknown to him on the battle-field, feared deeply for the future of his city, and thought with sorrow on the petty cause of such a war, where, on either side, hundreds of noble warriors had fallen to gratify the idle affection of Paris, who showed himself more disposed to remain within the walls with Helen than in armour to meet the enemies that he himself had stirred against his city.

Troilus, the young brother of Hector, and himself, in spite of his youth, a tried and valiant soldier, loved a maiden better even than Paris loved Helen, and the beauty of this maiden was held by many to rival if not to exceed the radiant loveliness of Helen herself. The name of her that Troilus loved was Cressida, and she believed that no other, not even Hector, was so brave, handsome and noble as the youth, Troilus. But Cressida did not allow Troilus to become aware of her affection for him, thinking, as all maidens, that his passion would be increased in believing her unattainable. Accordingly she feigned scorn whenever Troilus was mentioned, saying there were dozens such as he, comparing him to no advantage with the mighty Hector, and even ranking Paris before her lover.

The father of Cressida was a priest who had forsaken Troy with great treachery to aid the Greeks against his native city. In his desertion, the Trojans had given Cressida to the care of her aged uncle, Pandarus; and Troilus, who was not aware of Cressida's secret affection for him, begged Pandarus to aid him in his love and soften her heart until she looked on him with greater favour.

Pandarus did indeed attempt to influence his niece to favour Troilus, as he had done constantly hitherto, being in part the cause of the mutual affection between them, which he sought to inflame on every opportunity. But Pandarus did this from no worthy motive or any benevolence for either Cressida or Troilus, thinking less of the good parts of Troilus than of his princely rank and the rewards to be gained by serving him. For the nature of Pandarus was base and incapable of any affection or goodness.

When the warriors would enter the city, however, after their daily battle with the Greeks, Pandarus, in the hope to influence Cressida to fall in love with Troilus, would bid her to look upon them as they passed, saying, " Mark yonder, where Troilus goes. Look you how his sword is bloodied and his helm more hacked than Hector's. He is an admirable youth." And Pandarus would say that if he had a sister who were one of the graces, or a daughter rivalling the perfections of a goddess he would give her up to Troilus, praising him in most exalted terms and giving frequent hints of his devotion to Cressida. But Cressida, who thought in secret how poorly her uncle could do credit to the noble figure of her lover, pretended none the less to mock at Pandarus for praising him, and when she held Troilus most dear, she would laugh at him with open scorn and assume complete unconcern as to his presence.

Pandarus, however, was too sly to be deceived long by Cressida in such a manner; her every indifference to a youth of the good parts of Troilus, while she looked with favour on his brothers, was sufficient proof for Pandarus to guess the secret state of her affections; and when he saw that Cressida was becoming daily more in love with the young prince whom she pretended to despise, he resolved to bring the two together in a secret meeting where he knew that their love would prove too strong to be withheld, and that Cressida would be forced to reveal her real affection.

For this purpose Pandarus brought Troilus to his own house, where, to the youth's great joy Cressida at last declared her love for him in ardent terms, saying that all her indifference in the past had been merely feigned to render Troilus more certainly her own. Troilus replied that he loved Cressida so truly that in time to come all lovers in seeking to prove their love should speak of his; all great comparisons, he said, should be topped by saying, " As true as Troilus "; and with tender words the lovers swore true faith to one another. Cressida said that if she ever swerved a hair from the devoted love of Troilus, she wished that in time to come maidens in upbraiding falsehood could think of no stronger reproach than to say, " As false as Cressida." With many other and similar protestations they pledged lasting affection, while Pandarus, much delighted, bade them speak their minds in telling of their love, which became them so well, he said, that no outspoken pledge or any token could be too dear as proof of it. No lovers, continued Pandarus, should ever love so well as the two whom he had brought together with such pains; were it to be otherwise he wished with Cressida that his name might become a term of scorn forever, so that all pitiful persons who went on lovers' errands and aided them in their desires should be called " Pandars."

The happiness of the two lovers was hardly brought to this good issue, however, when misfortune befell them, for Cressida's father, who had been false to Troy, persuaded the Greeks to demand his daughter from the Trojans and to offer in exchange for her a Trojan prisoner named Antenor. Antenor was a person of such importance that the Trojans would have given one of their own princes to gain his liberty, for Antenor was skillful in war and had invented many ways whereby the Trojans had been able to defend their city against their besiegers. Priam, the king of Troy, consented to this exchange, and the Greeks sent one of their leaders, who was called Diomed, with Antenor into Troy, whence Diomed was to return with Cressida and bring her to her father's tent in the Greek encampment.

It happened that Diomed entered the city on this errand while Troilus was still with Cressida at the house of Pandarus; the lovers were made aware of his unwelcome approach and forced to separate; and it was not long before they were compelled to bid each other a speedy farewell, which they did with added sorrow at the short space of time allowed them for their parting.

Troilus said, however, that he would seek out Cressida in the Grecian tents even if he must break into their lines by force to complete his purpose, and he besought her to remain forever faithful to him. "I speak not in fear of your true faith," said Troilus, "for I will challenge Death himself upon its certainty. Be but true, and I will see you, for I will bribe the Grecian sentinels to let me pass through their lines by night to visit you," and stricken with sudden grief that they must part, Troilus added once again, "but yet, Cressida, be true."

"Surely," said Cressida, "you do not love me, or else you would never say that I could be otherwise than true and faithful to you."

"Hear why I speak it," replied Troilus, "for no fault of yours but a kind of godly jealousy makes me afraid. The Grecian youths are given to love-making and are masters of the graces that please ladies. They are able to play at subtle games, to sing, dance and converse artfully — while I myself, like all the Trojans, am unversed in these accomplishments."

Troilus gave Cressida a sleeve to wear in his absence, bidding her to keep it always as a token of their dear affection, and he bade her then to take farewell for they must part. To Diomed, who now came forward to accompany Cressida from the city, Troilus said that he must guard her with a tender care, adding that if

Diomed were ever at the mercy of his sword and should speak the name of Cressida it should become a talisman to save his life.

No more unfortunate speech could have been made to Diomed, who was a proud soldier, esteeming himself far greater at arms than Troilus; and turning to Cressida Diomed beheld that she was fair above all other women. He said then that the lustre in her eye and the heaven in her cheek should plead for tenderness at his hands far better than the words of any Trojan. For Diomed had fallen in love with Cressida the instant that he beheld her, and her beauty had awakened wonder and admiration within him.

Cressida then bade Troilus farewell with an affection seemingly as great as his, and was conveyed by Diomed to the Greek tents where her father awaited her.

Now whether the gods that watched over the siege of Troy had willed that Cressida should become untrue to Troilus in requital of Helen's treachery to the Greek Menelaus, or whether the false blood of Cressida's father, who had sought to betray his city, was at war within her heart with any true and steadfast affection cannot be told; but Cressida no sooner arrived at the Greek tents than she suffered Diomed to make advances of love to her, and in a space of time so short as to be almost incredible, Cressida loved Diomed as well as ever she had loved the deceived Troilus.

At the time when Cressida had been taken out of Troy by Diomed, the Trojan warrior, Hector, in accordance with an ancient custom, determined to maintain upon his sword the beauty of his wife, Andromache; and Hector sent among the Greeks a challenge to single combat, proclaiming that if any Greek esteemed his mistress better than ease or life, to him Hector would say that Andromache was twice as fair, and prove his words by defeating him in battle. This challenge, while general in its tone was known to intend the great Achilles, for no brighter fame could be won by Hector than to overthrow this mighty champion of the Greeks.

The Greek leaders feared, however, that if Achilles should slay Hector, his pride, already great, would become unbearable; while if Hector should slay Achilles, their chief hope and strength would be forever lost to them by his death. They decided, therefore, to make a pretence of drawing lots to choose who should answer Hector's challenge, and the lots were to be artfully arranged so that the choice should fall on Ajax — a blow in itself at Achilles' vanity, for Ajax while a powerful soldier was far inferior to Achilles.

It happened, however, that Ajax, who was chosen in this manner, was by a strange chance a distant kinsman to Hector, for in the veins of Ajax Trojan and Greek blood were strangely intermingled. On this account, Hector refused to fight with his full power against Ajax, or to continue long in the combat, for, as Hector said, his sword should never drain kindred and Trojan blood, and although Ajax were an arrant Greek, he must not slay him. So, after a short trial at arms where neither won advantage, Hector bade Ajax to put aside his sword and embrace him as a kinsman, for Ajax, Hector said, was worthy of his Trojan blood with the heart and strength of a brave soldier.

The truce that had been made between the contending armies, who desired to witness this combat, did not expire until dawn of the next day, and Achilles invited Hector to his tent, eager to behold unarmed the mightiest champion of Troy, who was considered by many to be greater even than Achilles himself. Achilles, looking on Hector and beholding his great limbs and soldierly appearance, felt a sudden desire for battle come upon him and determined that in spite of his vow never again to draw sword against the Trojans, on the next day to seek Hector on the battle-field and slay him. Achilles bade Hector to drink with him as a friend that night and taste his wine, for on the morrow he must assuredly taste his sword. And Hector was rejoiced that at last he was to do battle with the great Achilles, and asked his hand upon that match, bidding Achilles guard himself well when they should meet. Hector swore to slay Achilles, and he called the gods to witness that he would keep his oath.

Troilus, in his great love for Cressida, had accompanied Hector to the Greek encampment, and while Hector was being feasted and threatened at the tent of Achilles, Troilus besought Ulysses, a Greek leader, to take him to the spot where he might behold Cressida; but while Ulysses promised to lead him there, he said what sounded strangely in the ears of Troilus — that Diomed was feasting there that night, and that Diomed looked neither on heaven nor earth, but spent his loving gaze all on the fair Cressida, who seemed in no way loath to make return of his affection. Ulysses then asked Troilus if Cressida had not some lover in Troy, and what might be her name and reputation in the city.

"My lord," said Troilus, "she both did love and have her love returned. I beseech you guide me to her, for I find myself unable to believe what you have spoken." And Troilus could not think that Cressida had been false to him, until with his own eyes he should behold this to be true.

Ulysses, who knew that even then Diomed was in company with Cressida, bade Troilus to follow him in silence and to stand far from the torches, when he should soon perceive, Ulysses said, that his words had been spoken truly. And when Troilus came to the tent that was Cressida's dwelling, he beheld to his grief and amazement, that Cressida was exchanging vows of love with Diomed.

While Ulysses with his utmost powers was attempting to restrain Troilus from disclosing himself at this hateful sight, and breaking forth in bitter rage against Cressida and Diomed, Cressida gave Diomed the very sleeve that Troilus had bidden her so tenderly to keep as a pledge of his true faith, and she told Diomed to behold the token well, for he who had given it to her lay even at that moment thinking of the sleeve and her. Diomed said that he would wear it on his helm in battle and grieve the spirit of the Trojan who had owned it, for Cressida refused to tell him that the sleeve had belonged to Troilus; and Troilus vowed that the sleeve on Diomed's helmet should be the cause of his speedy death, for he would challenge him although the whole Greek army should oppose him. And before Troilus was able to upbraid Cressida for her faithlessness he was compelled to return to Troy and arm himself, for in the revelling at Achilles' tent and Cressida's faithless encounter with Diomed, the night had passed, and both the armies were again preparing for their daily conflict.

It was destined, however, that Diomed should not then fall before the sword of Troilus, for a terrible misfortune befell the city of Troy in the battle that began at dawn. Achilles, who was determined to slay Hector, cared not if he accomplished his purpose in open battle or by treachery. Indeed Achilles was more inclined to treachery than to open combat, for once during the day, when Hector, terrible in armour, came upon him, Achilles had avoided closing with him. But later, when Hector, wearied with fighting, had laid aside his sword and shield, Achilles encountered him, and Achilles bade him to behold how ugly night came breathing at the heels of the setting sun, for even so, he said, death was approaching Hector, and like the sun his life had run its course. The followers of Achilles then struck Hector to the ground, and Achilles tied the body to his chariot-wheels and dragged it beneath the walls of Troy shouting that Hector had been slain by his hand.

In the death of Hector the Trojans became partly aware of the terrible fate that threatened them, and Troilus in the horror at his death and in rage against Achilles, thought no more of his misguided affection for Cressida. And whether Diomed grew weary of Cressida and cast her off or what became of her cannot be known, for in the death of Hector the tale of Troilus and Cressida was ended.

CORIOLANUS

A QUARREL had arisen in Rome between the *patricians,* who were noblemen, and the men of more common birth who were called *plebeians.* The plebeians had demanded gifts of the corn that lay stored in the city capitol; and when refused they filled the streets with riots and confusion, casting the city into a grave disorder.

More than any other nobleman the plebeians hated Caius Marcius, a patrician who had often spoken bitterly against them to the senate, saying that they deserved no better of the state than to be beaten soundly to their homes and would be had he the ordering of it, aye, Marcius had declared, or slain, and their bodies piled in the market place. And Marcius had called them dogs and dissentious rogues, hares that should be lions, curs that liked neither peace nor war, becoming proud by the one and frightened by the other, untrustworthy as coals of fire on ice, or hailstones in the sun.

Marcius was not wholly unjustified in his contempt for the plebeians, for in the way of ignorant men they were prone to receive all benefits and yet give nothing in return. Whenever possible they would refuse to fight against Rome's enemies, but would call with the same breath for a share in Roman government, or without reason demand the food laid by for times of war and famine. Marcius, however, did not hate the plebeians only for their base and unsoldierlike qualities; he despised them also for their humble birth, for his nature was so proud that he could not endure the failings of weaker and lowlier persons than himself. He believed also that in allowing the people any authority, the patricians were sowing rank rebellion in the city, and that the plebeians in tasting a little power would soon grow to crave it as some sweet but fatal drug that poisoned them, until Rome must fall before their greedy indulgence and the vulgar, short-sighted policies of the rabble. Marcius, therefore, denied that as fellow-citizens the plebeians had any rights or privileges; he regarded them with scorn as slaves, and treated them with unworthy intolerance.

The rash pride and fiery opposition shown to the plebeians by Marcius, was regretted not a little by the wiser patricians, chiefly by a nobleman of age and experience named Menenius Agrippa. Whenever Marcius insulted the plebeians, Agrippa would endeavour to allay their anger, for Marcius, although intemperate in scorn, was a soldier of great achievement, endowed with manly and Roman virtues, and Agrippa loved him as a son. Agrippa feared, however, that pride would overthrow Marcius' fortunes, and on all opportunities would praise him to the plebeians, falling into conversation with them, as though by chance, of Marcius' noble qualities, or reminding them of some battle where Marcius had distinguished himself.

It was Agrippa also who once told to the plebeians the wonderful fable where he compared the Roman senate and nobility to the belly of a man, and the plebeians themselves to the corporal parts that served it,— to the kingly head and vigilant eye; the sturdy counsellor, the heart; the leg that bore the body as a steed, and the tongue, its trumpeter. Once, said Agrippa, these members of the body all revolted against the belly for whom they were condemned to labour, as they believed, without return or service on the belly's part, but they soon found out that the despised belly was the source of all their power, and that without its aid they scarce were able to bestir themselves. As the belly laboured for them constantly, although in ways that were, perhaps, unseen, just so, said Agrippa, did the senators of Rome apply their wisdom to the common good, — even to the foolish plebeians that rose in anger against them.

It so happened that in the very hour of this outbreak on the part of the plebeians, word came to Rome that a people called the Volscians under the leadership of a terrible warrior, Aufidius, were devastating the whole countryside with fire and sword, preparing even to march on Rome and besiege the city. Cominius, a Roman general, was given troops to crush the Volscians, and Marcius accompanied him as second in command — a fortunate station, for should disaster befall the Romans, the blame would all be laid upon Cominius; but should they triumph, Marcius would reap the praise, so great was his reputation as a soldier. Marcius determined to slay with his own hand the Volscian leader, Aufidius, for aware of his own great skill and courage, he deemed Aufidius his only worthy opponent. And Marcius declared that were the entire world in peace, he would revolt to make his war upon Aufidius alone.

Marcius had a noble mother, Volumnia, who was in a large measure the cause of his great fame and soldierly reputation. Volumnia had trained him to think that he must exceed all other men, or deem himself disgraced. When he was but a boy, Volumnia sent him to a cruel war, whence he returned with his brows bound with oak as a sign of courage. Volumnia rejoiced in the coming conflict which would give her son yet another chance to win renown and honour; and while Marcius was at the war, she went abroad with calm and unmoved demeanour to visit with her neighbours, or, with a serene countenance, remained at home to sew and spin, exhorting his wife, Virgilia, to do the like and to show no sign of the fear that tortured her in her husband's absence.

The severe training that Marcius had received from his Roman mother was well justified in the war against the Volscians, where he outdid all his former feats at arms. When the Romans had retreated, it was Marcius who drove them back to the conflict manifesting bravery that was the wonder of his soldiers. He followed the Volscians single-handed through the gates of a town called Corioli, whence he came forth alive by a miracle of fortune; and laying siege to Corioli, Marcius struck it like a thunderbolt and captured the city. He then went to the aid of his general, Cominius, who was sore pressed by the Volscian soldiers, and with the aid of Marcius, Cominius was rescued and the Volscians put to flight, leaving the Romans everywhere victorious. But Marcius had not succeeded in slaying Aufidius, although he had engaged with him in combat, for a company of Volscians rescued their general when Marcius had beaten him to his knees and was prepared to deal him a fatal blow. And Marcius regretted Aufidius' escape more keenly than he rejoiced in the success now crowning the Roman banners — a success due wholly to his own courageous action.

There was great joy among the Romans at their victory, and Cominius ordered that Marcius, who had saved the day, should be dignified by the surname of *Coriolanus,* whereby he should be called forever after as a token of respect and admiration. The soldiers with acclamations hailed him by this honourable title, and returned victorious to Rome bearing him with triumph into the city.

Many of the plebeians had served in the army under Marcius and witnessed his bravery. In the manner of ignorant men, their former hatred of his scorn was changed to thoughtless wonder at his present achievement, and when it was proposed that Marcius be given the office of consul, it appeared that he would have the unreserved approval of the plebeians which was necessary for any claimant to that office. Marcius, however, now regarded the plebeians with greater contempt than ever, having been compelled to drive them to battle by blows and to suppress them in mutinies and revolts where, as he said, they showed more courage than against the enemy.

There was a custom in Rome that he who would be consul must stand in humble garments in some public place and beg of the plebeians their consent to his election. Marcius wished to avoid this custom and besought Agrippa to tell him some means to escape it, but Agrippa answered angrily, saying that avoidance was not to be thought of and bidding Marcius prepare with all speed to meet the plebeians. It was a custom, Agrippa said, that all honourable men had conformed to, and he asked why Marcius should be freed from it. He prayed his friend to put aside such foolish arrogance which would lose him all his fame and fortune; and

Marcius was compelled to don the loose robe worn on such an occasion, and go forth to the market-place to meet the plebeians.

Among the plebeians there were public officers called tribunes, two of whom, Sicinius and Brutus, liked it but ill that Marcius was to be elected to the office of consul which would give him great control over the people whom he so despised. Sicinius and Brutus also had observed his unwillingness to meet the plebeians in the market-place, and they plotted to anger the plebeians against him on the first opportunity. They hoped that in the public meeting where Marcius must ask of the people their consent to his election, his pride might show itself and become a handle to their purpose, " For he will beg," said Sicinius, " as if he does despise the favour he requests "; and Brutus answered, saying that a man as proud as Marcius must feel shame so to demean himself before the multitude. Sicinius said that he sincerely hoped Marcius would give the plebeians some cause of offence, for otherwise they would be undone in electing for their consul one whose chief purpose was to destroy them.

In the meanwhile Marcius in his humble garments had prepared for the ordeal in store for him, but he could no more frame fair speeches for the ears of the plebeians than he could put his heart into such a purpose. Although in humble garb, he accosted the plebeians proudly, saying that his merit, not his desire, had brought him in such a pass before them, for it had never been his choice, he said, to trouble the poor with begging. And while he spoke to them in civil words asking his election, he did so with a doubtful manner and veiled contempt that made the slow-witted plebeians wonder if he were ridiculing them. Nevertheless they consented to his election; but Marcius thanked them then with even less concealment of his scorn, telling them that as he now had their approval, which he was pleased to call their " alms," he would bid them adieu and trouble them no further. He prepared then to be invested with the power and the name of a Roman consul.

Sicinius and Brutus, in the meanwhile, came among the plebeians and asked them in what manner Marcius had requested their approval. The plebeians said that he had done so with concealed contempt, difficult to explain precisely, but clearly evident both in his words and manner. "Then you were childish," said Sicinius, "to consent that he should become your ruler," and Brutus called them fools to yield up power into the hands of one who would use it for their injury. With clever accusations the two tribunes kindled a flame of anger against Marcius, until the people revoked the consent they had but lately given to his election and filled the market-place to oppose his way to the senate house, crying out that a devil should be consul sooner than Caius Marcius who despised them.

Sicinius and Brutus then prepared to halt the patricians who were conveying Marcius to the hall of state where his new title was to be given him, and they contrived to do so in a manner to awaken him to anger, hoping that in his rage he would injure himself even further among the plebeians. When Marcius was well on his way to the senate house, Sicinius and Brutus forbade him curtly to go further; when he demanded their reason, they replied, as he considered, with great insolence, calling out for the plebeians to lay hands on him for resisting them; and when Marcius in a storm of rage burst forth into a fiery tirade against plebeians and tribunes alike, abusing them with keen scorn and invective aptly chosen, the tribunes commanded that he should be hurled from the Tarpeian precipice, condemning him to the death that the Romans were used to inflict upon their criminals. A riot then took place, for the plebeians fell upon the patricians with stones and clubs, seeking to slay Marcius, until the patricians with drawn swords drove the enraged and shouting rabble to a distance.

In great distress Agrippa then besought Marcius to retire to his house while yet there was time, for the plebeians were rallying to make another attack upon him, and he persuaded Marcius with great difficulty to leave the market-place, for Marcius was prepared to defy the plebeians single-handed if need be, so great was his anger against them. Agrippa spoke artfully to the plebeians as they returned, telling them that it was ever the way of soldiers to be rough of tongue and that Marcius intended them no harm by his ungentle words. If they would have patience, said Agrippa, he himself would fetch Marcius to answer in due order all their accusations. The old man then hurried to the house of Marcius, bidding him in the name of all the gods to come forth and speak the plebeians fair and show them some appearance of respect, for even yet they might be pacified. Volumnia joined her entreaties to Agrippa's, praying Marcius to go in humility and kneel before them, for action, as she said, was eloquent in such a turmoil. She bade him tell them that he was a soldier who did not possess the softer way of speech that was as fit for him to use as theirs to claim — thus, she said, her son should win them utterly and gain the office he desired; and Cominius entered saying that he had just been to the market-place, where Marcius even now might pacify the plebeians if he would speak to them with apparent gentleness. Marcius at last consented to their entreaties, although he said that the tears of schoolboys must water his cheeks and a beggar's tongue be placed between his lips for such a purpose. Still, he prepared to go, and with the patricians he made his way a second time to the market-place, where the plebeians were awaiting him.

The tribunes, however, beholding the anger with which Marcius had regarded them, had resolved to charge him with the crime of treason to his country, for they believed, and rightly, that such an accusation would cast him into another violent passion in the presence of the multitude, who in their turn would be further inflamed against him. So, when Marcius returned to the market-place in company with the patricians, the tribunes addressed him haughtily, asking him if he were content to listen to his crimes and suffer lawful censure for such faults as should be proved against him.

Even then new anger had commenced to rise in the heart of

Marcius, and he replied that he would be content when first the tribunes should inform him why the people had refused the office of consul that they had promised to him. The tribunes answered that he was there to be judged, not to ask the why and wherefor of his just disgrace. They charged him then with plots to win an undue power in the state, and called him a traitor to the people.

On the disgraceful term of traitor being applied to him, Marcius could contain himself no longer, but for a second time burst into anger against plebeians and tribunes, calling Sicinius an injurious liar, which he would do, he said, were twenty thousand deaths the penalty. When Agrippa reminded him of his promise Marcius refused to hear him, calling out for the powers of Hell to take the plebeians, exclaiming that the curs could pronounce upon him death, exile, flogging or imprisonment, whatever might please them best, for he would not buy their mercy with one fair word.

The tribunes had ordered the plebeians to support them in whatever sentence they should impose on Marcius. They said now that on account of his former services they had decided to spare his life, but they condemned him, none the less, to instant and eternal banishment, forbidding him ever to re-enter Rome on pain of death. The plebeians then raised their voices in approval of the tribunes' sentence, shouting at Marcius with scorn and derision, while many crowded to the city gates to hoot him into exile.

Thus with intolerance and anger as great as his own, Marcius was driven from the city that he had saved. As for the plebeians, he defied them bitterly with the wish that they might ever continue to banish their defenders; and taking leave of his wife and mother in great sorrow, Marcius turned his back upon his country.

When Marcius was banished, he bethought him of his enemy, Aufidius, who had retired, after his defeat by the Romans, to the city of Antium, where he won great influence in state affairs and was honoured by the people; and Marcius was determined to seek Aufidius, not for the purpose of further combat, but to offer his services against the Romans who had cast him from their gates.

It was of small consequence to Marcius that Aufidius and the people of Antium might instantly slay him. Far greater than such fear was his desire to revenge himself upon the Romans, which could be accomplished only through alliance with their enemies.

Aufidius on his part had thought constantly about his great enemy, Marcius, whom he was resolved to be revenged upon; and he would often dream that he and Marcius again were in deadly combat with each other, locked in a fierce embrace or giving and exchanging dangerous blows. Although Aufidius imagined these encounters only in his sleep, his dreams were so real to him that he would awaken from them fainting with exhaustion as though he had indeed been striving in battle and they served well to keep alive and hot the hatred that he bore to Marcius.

A feast was being given by Aufidius to the senators and statesmen of Antium, when Marcius in ragged garments entered his house. When the servants attempted to repel him, Marcius drove them away, demanding to speak with their master, and struck with fear at his manner they bore word to Aufidius that a mad stranger was within who insisted on seeing him, until Aufidius quitted the banquet hall and came face to face with Marcius, demanding his name and why with such insolence he forced his way into a private dwelling at such a time.

Marcius replied that his name was most unmusical to Volscian ears and harshest in its sound of all the world to Aufidius, who had good cause to know it well.

" You have a grim appearance," said Aufidius, " your face bears command. Though your garments are torn, you show nobility. Tell me your name, I pray you."

Marcius answered, saying defiantly that the harm he had worked upon Aufidius and all Volscians was witnessed by his surname of Coriolanus. The nobles of his city, as he said, had basely deserted him, allowing slaves to hoot him forth from Rome in banishment. This disgrace had brought him to the dwelling of Aufidius, where, if he feared death, he would not stand, for of all men living Aufidius was the most dangerous to him. But, said Marcius, if Aufidius and the people of Antium had a heart to be revenged on Rome, his misery would serve them well, for he would fight against his cankered country with the anger of the under fiends. If they doubted this, he continued, he offered Aufidius his throat to cut which not to do would prove Aufidius no better than a fool, as Marcius had ever followed him with hate and could not live but to his shame unless he lived to do him service.

"O Marcius," cried Aufidius, "every word you have spoken has weeded from my heart a root of ancient envy. If Jupiter should speak divine things I would not believe them more true than your own words." He said that even then there was an expedition on foot against the Romans where he had purposed once again to strive with Marcius in valour on the battle-field; and Aufidius continued that he had loved the maid he married, never man sighed truer breath than he, but his heart danced more at thus beholding Marcius than when he bore his wedded bride across his threshold. He then led Marcius to the place of feasting, where the senators of Antium were assembled. They greeted Marcius with hearty welcome and sincere respect and created him commander over their army with a power equal to that of Aufidius.

But how much terror was awakened among the Romans when they heard that Marcius, whom they had but lately banished, was advancing with hot malice to destroy them! For Marcius had determined to sacrifice them all to his revenge and leave no man, woman or child of Rome alive, including in his hate even his former friends who were, he said, like scattered grains of wheat in a great pile of chaff, not worth the labour of sifting. And it appeared that Marcius' great anger had blinded him to the dearest ties of his affection, for while his mother with his wife and little son were still in Rome, he and Aufidius led their soldiers to the Roman walls and invested the city with a relentless and terrible siege that might not be resisted.

Now did the plebeians turn against the tribunes who had counselled them to banish Marcius, and now they remembered well his former services in war and his glory on the battle-field, for these were brought sternly home to them by finding their former protector a raging enemy. In great fear the plebeians begged the friends of Marcius to go into his camp and endeavour to dissuade him from his cruel and terrible purpose, and Cominius his former general and dear companion visited him. But Marcius dismissed Cominius with a motion of his hand, refusing to speak a single word, and the aged Agrippa was driven away with equal scorn, Marcius giving him no word of comfort, saying only that he knew not wife, mother, or child and was turned Volscian. The Romans must prepare for death, for he would cast them one and all into the flames of their own dwellings; and turning to Aufidius, Marcius bade him mark the deadly certainty of his purpose, for Agrippa, as he said, had been beloved by him in former days, and yet he now drove the old man back to Rome with a broken heart, as Aufidius could perceive.

Agrippa returned to Rome in utter sadness and bade the people to prepare for their execution. He said that sentence of death was passed upon them, and that there was no thought of mercy in the breast of Marcius.

In a last hope to win Marcius to be merciful, his mother Volumnia approached him with his wife and little son, all robed in black and bending in supplication; and the sorrowing family cast themselves before him. Volumnia bade him to behold how unproperly she thus did duty, kneeling with no softer cushion than the flint before that son whom she had helped to frame and bring into the world. She bade Marcius to look on his unhappy family who were constrained to weep on seeing him, when his presence by all natural laws should bring nothing but joy to their hearts. Marcius, she continued, had bereft them of all comfort, even of praying to the gods in their extremity, for how could they pray for his success, she asked, when this must mean the ruin of his city, and how could they wish Rome to conquer when the Roman's victory would demand that Marcius must be led as a foreign recreant through Roman streets — a traitor. How would history speak of such unnatural scenes and say of Marcius: "This man was noble, but his last attempt wiped all the honour out"? For her own part, Volumnia concluded, she would not wait until that time or even until the enemy had broken down the Roman walls. No sooner should they march to the attack, than Marcius must tread upon the mother's womb that brought him into the world.

Marcius, although much affected by her sorrow, would then have dismissed her, but Volumnia still clung to him, imploring him to show the grace of mercy; and his wife and son joined in her appeals, until it seemed as if a man of iron could not resist them, and Marcius could bear their words no longer.

Volumnia had won for Rome a happier victory than all the swords of Italy could have effected, for Marcius said to Aufidius that he would proceed no further with the siege, asking Aufidius if he could have done less when spoken to in such a way by his own mother. But Marcius cried out to Volumnia, asking if she knew what she had done. She had saved Rome, he said, but with her own son she had prevailed most dangerously, if not to his mortal hurt. For he feared that when he should return to Antium, the senators on hearing of his action would decree his death. Yet Marcius still refused to place his foot within the hated city of Rome.

Marcius then departed, telling his mother that the Romans should build a temple in her honour. She had saved them one and all from certain death and their city from destruction, for he had resolved he said that even the name of Rome should perish beneath his hand. He returned with Aufidius to Antium, leaving Rome with no less hatred than he came, and the Romans never again beheld him.

The Romans cherished Volumnia among the noblest of all their patriots and her name and her great service were entered in the archives of their city. As for Marcius, his belief in the fate that awaited him at Antium was only too certain, for he was treacherously slain there by no other than Aufidius. But the people of Antium gave Marcius a soldier's funeral resolving that in spite of all the injury they had received at his hands, his memory should be noble and fair among them.

JULIUS CÆSAR

MARCUS BRUTUS was a Roman of noble birth, whose ancestors, famous for the stern patriotism with which they guarded their city against tyrants, believed that their chief duty was to preserve Rome from internal enemies, holding traitors more dangerous than hostile armies and undue power in the hands of any citizen the most harmful evil to the Roman state. Brutus inherited the temper of his forefathers, and was loved alike by the common people and the most famous men of Rome — both for the great name that he bore and for the noble qualities of his disposition that rendered him in all eyes worthy of the utmost favour. First among the friends of Brutus was Julius Cæsar who held him in affectionate regard and conferred kindness and honour upon him.

Brutus, who beheld in Cæsar the qualities of greatness shine with so brilliant a lustre that few men have known the equal, made full return of Cæsar's friendship and affection. And although Cæsar, as the conqueror of the world, was worthy of the utmost reverence, Brutus in many ways was not inferior to his mighty friend,— rather did he surpass Cæsar in the pure and self-sacrificing flame of his patriotism, being prepared to render up his life and what was far dearer to him, his personal honour, in any cause that he considered for his country's good. This disinterested patriotism on the part of Brutus was stronger even than his friendship for Julius Cæsar.

As every great man has bitter enemies, there were in Rome many who through spite and secret ambition were resolved to curb Cæsar's flight to that of their own lesser powers, to pluck his laurels from him and work on him all possible injury. Chief of these was Caius Cassius, to whom the glory of another than himself was gall and bitterness.

Cassius was possessed of a dark and rebellious spirit that suffered him no joy or peace of mind while he beheld any other to be greater than himself. Cassius scorned the amusements of his fellows; the common sports and pleasures of his time, the enjoyments in which his countrymen took delight were held by him to be contemptible. He saw no plays, and listened to no music. He seldom smiled, and when he did he smiled as if he mocked himself for being moved to mirth. And Cassius, who was a great observer, would spend his time considering the deeds of other men; and his thoughts were gloomy, discontented and dangerous.

Cassius had formed a plot against the life of Cæsar, and numbered among his fellows as many restless and intolerant spirits as private hatred and malicious envy could assemble for his purpose. Knowing the character of Brutus, who with all his virtues was open to deception, Cassius determined to persuade him that his great friend Cæsar was indeed too great for safety, and appealing openly to Brutus' sense of patriotism, in secret to flatter his pride and misdirect his energies until Brutus should consent to Cæsar's death. For Brutus, he believed, was held so dear in the hearts of all the people that his name and countenance would gild the evil efforts of the other conspirators, changing offence to virtue, until Cæsar's murder should appear a high and honourable sacrifice.

There were at this time certain signs that should have warned Cæsar of the danger that threatened him, for when he was being accompanied through Rome in triumph after his defeat of the great Pompey, a voice cried out to him in the street, bidding him beware the Ides of March in tones of strange and prophetic warning; and when Cæsar halted his progress and commanded that the speaker be set before him, there was brought into his presence an old man who was a soothsayer, having a strange power to foretell the future, and he bade Cæsar a second time to beware the Ides of March in tones of unearthly significance that the bystanders shuddered to hear. Other warning prophecies had been made to Cæsar, but he, who called himself danger's elder brother, regarded none of them, and went his way unheeding the utterance of the soothsayer.

It was then that Cassius resolved to approach Brutus with the secret infamy he meditated, and no time could have suited his purpose more exactly, for Brutus himself, with the thoughts of his country that were ever in his mind, had begun to fear that Cæsar was too powerful. He had remained behind in thought, while Cæsar in his triumphant march continued after being halted by the soothsayer; and Cassius came on Brutus when his brow was dark at a distant shouting that made him think the people were proclaiming Cæsar king.

Cassius, who beheld the distress and uneasiness of Brutus and marked how he alone remained solitary while all others were celebrating Cæsar's triumph, was able partly to read his thoughts and to guess the cause of his disturbance, that made itself evident both by look and gesture. He spoke to Brutus in a crafty manner, saying it was to be lamented that Brutus might not behold his own secret thoughts, which Cassius like a mirror would now disclose to him by reflection. And he gave to Brutus obscure hints of his purpose, that Brutus, whose brain was quick with the same thoughts — although as yet he guessed them not, was quick to read. And Brutus asked him what he meant by speaking to him in that manner and inquired into what dangers Cassius would lead him, by bidding him look inward on himself to read what was not in his heart.

As he spoke these words, there came another distant shout, louder than any previous, and with it there was a prolonged noise of trumpets, and Brutus exclaimed, "What can this shouting mean?" and said he feared the people had chosen Cæsar for their king.

"If you fear it, Brutus," said Cassius, "I must think you would not have it so."

"That I would not," said Brutus, "and yet I love Cæsar well. But why do you hold me here so long? What is it that you would impart to me? If it be anything for the general public good speak boldly and I will hear you, aye and follow you, Cassius, wherever

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you will lead, for as the gods may speed me while I love the name of honour more than I fear death, yet will I look on both indifferently in such a cause."

Cassius then spoke more boldly. He said that both he and Brutus were born as free as Cæsar; that both had fed as well and could endure the winter's cold as well as he,— aye, better, for once, said Cassius, he rescued Cæsar from the raging Tiber, bearing him on his shoulders from the flood when together on a raw and gusty day they had attempted to swim its torrent. This was the man, said Cassius, who had become a god, to whom he, a wretched creature must bend his body if Cæsar carelessly but nod on him! It did amaze him, said he, that a man of so feeble temper had become so mighty. He called Cæsar a colossus that bestrode the world while more petty men walked under his huge legs and peeped about to find dishonourable graves; and in a fit of jealous rage he cried, " Now, in the names of all the gods, upon what meat doth Cæsar feed that he is grown so great! " He said the fault that they were underlings lay not in their stars but in themselves, for all men at some time were masters of their fates, if they would but seize their opportunities. He then bade Brutus to think of his ancestors, who would have bowed to the rule of any evil spirit sooner than to a Roman king, for once there was a Brutus, said Cassius, who drove the Tarquin from the streets of Rome for being called a king.

Hardly had he spoken in this manner, when they learned that Cæsar's follower, Mark Antony, had offered Cæsar thrice, a kingly crown, which Cæsar, to be sure, had thrice refused, though each time, it was said, with greater gentleness, putting it aside as though he fain would have accepted it. And Brutus on hearing this, whispered to Cassius to come to him again and speak further of his purposes, for he was torn between a natural and loving affection for his friend and the fear lest Cæsar should indeed become a king. And Cassius rejoiced greatly to have stricken such show of fire from one who by all laws of gratitude and kindness should have been Cæsar's dearest supporter.

To influence Brutus even further, Cassius had letters secretly thrown in at his window; and in these, which were written in different hands, as though they came from several citizens, the noble qualities of Brutus were highly praised and Cæsar's ambition glanced at; and in the letters also was written, "*Brutus, thou sleep'st, awake!*" and the words "*speak, strike, redress!*"

The night that Brutus received the letters was dark, and terrible with thunder and lightning. The sky seemed to rain fire upon the city, and strange occurrences affrighted all that went abroad. A common slave was seen to hold up his left hand that flamed like twenty torches; men all in fire walked the streets, and a thousand fearful apparitions brought terror to all that beheld them.

To Brutus, in the hour before dawn, came all the conspirators, closely muffled in their cloaks so that none might recognize them. They resolved to murder Cæsar that very morning in the senate house. The manner of the murder should be that all were to surround him and when Casca, one of their number, raised his hand to strike, the rest should fall on Cæsar with their swords, and slay him.

Cassius would have made them swear one and all to perform what they intended, but Brutus would not have it so, saying that if their purpose were so weak it must be strengthened by an oath, they were better all at home in their idle beds while tyranny ranged on unchecked; while if their hearts were sure and their purpose certain (for it was a purpose, said Brutus, to make bold the hearts of cowards and fire the spirits of women) what other bond was needed than their secret word? Brutus likewise refused to consent to the murder of Mark Antony, whom Cassius wished to slay with Cæsar; for Brutus thought their course would then seem too bloody, like wrath in death and envy afterwards. And Brutus, who loved Cæsar even while plotting against him, bade them slay him boldly but without wrath as a sacrifice fit for the gods. Thus, said he, they should be called patriots, not murderers, and their purpose should seem to have been performed less out of envy than for the common good of Rome. The conspirators then departed with their plot completed. Some were to fetch Cæsar to the senate house; the rest were to contrive to be near his person there. And Brutus was left alone in that waking hour betwixt night and dawn, a prey to terrible thoughts that distracted him.

Calpurnia, the wife of Cæsar, had been sorely frightened by the strange occurrences of the night, and evil dreams had befallen her. She dreamed that Cæsar's statue spouted blood in an hundred different places, and that many smiling Romans came to bathe their hands in it. In the morning when she beheld Cæsar prepare to go forth as usual, she cried that he should not stir out of his house that day; and she recounted to him all the fearsome things that had befallen. A lioness, said she, had whelped in the open streets; graves had yawned and yielded up their dead; and ranks and squadrons of fierce warriors had fought upon the clouds, so that the noise of battle was born through all the air and blood was sprinkled on the Capitol. Word was then brought to Cæsar from the augurers — the priests who foretold the future by strange signs that none save themselves could read — counselling him to stay within his house, for on plucking forth the entrails of a beast that they had slain in sacrifice, they could find no heart within it.

Calpurnia, when hearing this, called on Cæsar by all that was dear to her to go not forth, for she feared these signs were portents of his speedy death; and on her knees she begged him to remain at home, until Cæsar said at last that he would humour her and that Mark Antony should bear word to the senators he would not come that day.

On that instant, however, a conspirator came to fetch Cæsar to the senate house. On hearing that he would not go, and for what reasons, he said the dream was all amiss interpreted — the statue spouting blood in which so many smiling Romans bathed, signified that from the noble Cæsar Rome should suck reviving energies and great men seek his favour. The senate (as he said) had concluded on that very day to give a crown to mighty Cæsar; would not their minds change in case he should remain away until Calpurnia had better dreams, and might not people also mock at Cæsar and say to one another, "Can it be that Cæsar is afraid?" In short the reasons for his going were so artfully contrived, and other conspirators who he believed friends were now urging him forth with such persistence, that Cæsar said he was ashamed to have yielded to Calpurnia; he called for his robe, for he would go, and set forth all unconscious that none save relentless enemies were near him.

On his way to the senate, Cæsar encountered once again the soothsayer who had cried out in warning on the day previous, and Cæsar said to him, "The Ides of March have come," to which the soothsayer replied, "Ay, Cæsar, but not yet passed." Another old man then thrust into Cæsar's hand a paper giving warning of his danger, which might yet have saved him had he read it, but he put it aside unread, entered the senate house and took his place near Pompey's statue to hear the order of the day.

At this the conspirators brought forward a petition that they knew well Cæsar would refuse to grant, and one by one they addressed him, calling him mighty Cæsar, kneeling before him and caressing his garments, until Casca giving the signal by lifting his dagger stabbed him treacherously from behind, when one by one they turned their weapons against him. And when Cæsar beheld the hand of his beloved Brutus raised to strike, he could bear no more and muffling his face in his toga, fell bleeding in front of Pompey's statue and there died.

Then with uplifted weapons the conspirators shouted, "Liberty! Freedom!" and Brutus cried out to the people that they should have no fear: harm was intended to no other than Cæsar. For a roar as from a mighty sea had arisen when Cæsar fell, and men ran blindly here and there, calling out in horror, grief and amazement. Guarding themselves, the conspirators stood in a little group to defend themselves if need be against the people, and they bathed their hands and arms in Cæsar's blood, preparing, when the turmoil had subsided to walk forth with crimson weapons and cry "peace," "freedom" and "liberty" even to the market-place.

While they were thus standing with unwiped swords, a servant of Mark Antony came and fell before them, saying that his master bade him to do so, and, being prostrate, bade him to say that Brutus was noble, wise, valiant and honest; that if Brutus would vouchsafe that Antony might safely come to him and be resolved how Cæsar had deserved to lie in death, Antony should not love Cæsar dead so well as Brutus living, but would follow him with all true faith and be his friend in all his fortunes and affairs.

Brutus bade the servant to tell Antony that safety should be given him and Antony shortly came upon them. Beholding Cæsar dead, he scarce could contain himself and wept over the body. He bade each one of the conspirators render him his bloody hand, saying that he would remember them in equal love: friends would he be with all (on the hope and condition, as he said, that they give him reasons wherein Cæsar was dangerous). And Antony said further that he begged of them one boon: that as became a friend, he should be allowed to speak to the people at Cæsar's funeral.

Brutus granted this request and gave Antony the charge of Cæsar's body. He said that Antony should speak all good of Cæsar but say no blame of those that slew him; and further, said Brutus, Antony must say he spoke by leave of the conspirators, to which Antony assented. For Antony knew that could he but once address the people, his grief and anger, inspiring his words, would set on foot the greatest mischief to the murderers; and the limits Brutus imposed on him were still not great enough to thwart his purpose, for Antony was master of the art of making fair words praise or condemn as he might choose.

And now that Antony was left alone with Cæsar's body, he gave way to tears and addressed the bleeding form that lay before him, asking the dead Cæsar to forgive him that he seemed so meek and gentle with these butchers. And over Cæsar's wounds that seemed, he said, to open their ruby lips and beg the voice and utterance of his tongue, Antony bade Cæsar to have patience, for the dogs of war should be let loose in Italy until they should revenge his death. And Antony prophesied destruction and fierce civil strife as a result of that foul deed, that should be made to smell above the earth, like carrion men, groaning for burial.

The conspirators, in the meanwhile, had gone to the forum, and Brutus addressed the throng that had assembled there. He called them Romans, fellow-countrymen, and bade them hear him to the end and have respect for his honour that they might believe. He said that as Cæsar loved him, so did he weep for Cæsar; as Cæsar was fortunate, he rejoiced at it; as he was valiant, he honoured him; but as he was ambitious, he slew him. Who, said Brutus, was so base that he would be a slave and a bondman? If any, let him speak, for him alone this sacrifice had offended. He added that as he slew his dearest friend for the glory of Rome, he had the same dagger for himself when it should please his country to need his death; and having won the people by his words, Brutus bade them to listen to Mark Antony, who, by his permission, was to do grace unto Cæsar's corpse and speak of Cæsar's glories. For himself, he entreated them to let him depart unattended and to harken to the words of his successor. So Antony, his eyes all red with weeping, ascended the speaker's place and addressed the multitude.

He came, he said, to bury Cæsar, not to praise him. The evil that men did lived after them,— the good was oft interred with their bones. The noble Brutus had told them Cæsar was ambitious and ambition were a grievous fault. Cæsar, said Antony, was his own dear friend, faithful and just to him. He had brought many captives home to Rome whose ransom did the general coffers fill. Was that ambition? When the poor had cried, Cæsar had wept. Ambition should be made of sterner stuff. They all did see how Antony had offered Cæsar thrice a kingly crown, which Cæsar thrice refused. And how, asked Antony, was that ambition? Still, he said, he came not to disprove the noble Brutus who was an honourable man (as were they all that had killed Cæsar), he came merely to speak what he did know: that all had once loved Cæsar, not without cause. What cause withheld them, then, to mourn for him?

Antony then showed them Cæsar's will which he said he would not read — for it would wrong the honourable men whose daggers had killed Cæsar. But should he read it, the people would all weep and dip their handkerchiefs in Cæsar's sacred blood — yea, beg a hair from him in memory, mentioning it in their own wills as a rich legacy to be bequeathed to their heirs forever. It was not meet that they should know how Cæsar had loved them. Descending to the body Antony then lifted Cæsar's mantle and showed his wounds, saying that all did know that mantle — it was the one that Cæsar wore that day he overcame the Nervii. Here ran Cassius' dagger through; there was the rent the envious Casca made; here Brutus stabbed,— and Antony bade them mark how blood had followed that last stroke as if it had rushed forth to know if it were indeed Brutus who knocked with such unkindness, for Brutus, as they all knew, was Cæsar's dearest friend, almost his angel.

When the people, who had been thrown into a frenzy by this speech of Antony's, were breaking away to set fire to the houses of the conspirators, Antony called them back saying they had forgotten the will that they had forced him, although against his better judgment, now to read. And he read how Cæsar had bequeathed them every one seventy-five drachmas, how he had left to them and their heirs forever all his walks, all his private arbours and new-planted orchards on this side of the river Tiber — common pleasure-grounds where they might walk abroad and recreate themselves. And the reading of the will — as Antony had intended — aroused such rage and grief among the people that they straightway rushed to the homes of the conspirators and burned them, seeking to shed the last drop of blood of all that had taken part in Cæsar's death.

The conspirators, however, had learned of their approach and had fled from the city, riding like madmen through the gates, for Rome was now in the complete control of Antony and his followers.

And Brutus and Cassius assembled an army and awaited near Sardis the approach of Antony, who, with a nephew of Cæsar named Octavius, and a great force of soldiers were come in their pursuit.

At this time there came upon Brutus a visitation that made him well aware his cause was lost and that the murder of Cæsar must be requited by the death of those that slew him: for one night when Brutus sat awake in his tent, while all others slept and the lamp burned low, he saw an apparition moving towards him in the likeness of the murdered Cæsar, and it was indeed his ghost. It cried to Brutus it had come as his evil angel and would meet him once again at Philippi. It then vanished, leaving Brutus pale and shaken. And strangely enough, the forces of Antony and Octavius came upon Brutus in such a manner that they must be encountered near the place the spirit had mentioned to him. And there the ghost appeared again to Brutus, and in a bloody battle that followed, the death of Cæsar was requited for Antony overwhelmed the troops of the conspirators and Brutus and Cassius both perished, slaying themselves sooner than to be taken captive and led chained through Rome at the chariot-wheels of their conqueror.

Thus was the tragedy concluded that had its beginning largely through the mistaken patriotism of Marcus Brutus. For Brutus, as Antony afterward said of him, was the only one of the conspirators who had not acted out of envy of Cæsar's greatness. His conquerors, therefore, gave Brutus' body an honourable burial, using him according to his virtues, as a soldier and a patriot of Rome.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

IN Egypt there once reigned a beautiful and ambitious queen named Cleopatra, of such rare charm and strange attraction that she seemed to cast a spell over all men that came into her presence; and Cleopatra used her beauty with a deep and artful cleverness to win whatever she desired — in a manner beyond explanation, almost magical.

Cleopatra had been placed upon the throne of Egypt by Julius Cæsar, who won her kingdom from her brother Ptolemy — for Cæsar had been stricken with instant and blinding affection for Cleopatra, who overpowered him with the amazing wonder of her beauty until he became bound hand and foot to do her service. But when Cæsar was murdered, his control over the Roman dominions of which Egypt was part, was taken by three men who called themselves triumvirs, one of whom was Cæsar's former friend, Mark Antony.

When the triumvirs divided the Roman territory, Egypt and the kingdoms of the east were given to Mark Antony, and Cleopatra determined to win his heart as she had won the heart of Cæsar before him, until like Cæsar, Antony should be fast fettered in her love to do her bidding. For Cleopatra intended through the love of Antony to become the mistress of the eastern kingdoms that he ruled, and she resolved to spare no pains to win this power for which purpose she must first become the mistress of Antony's affections.

So, when Antony came into the east, Cleopatra surrounded herself with a display of wealth unparalleled even in that day, when kings and queens spared no splendour in their adornment; and she sailed down the river Cydnus to meet him, in a barge wonderful with gold until it seemed to burn upon the water. The oars were all of silver and kept stroke to time of flutes that played in pleasing melody; the sails were of purple silk, perfumed until the very winds were love-sick with them and a strange and subtle scent was blown to the shore. On deck, in a pavilion of gold cloth, where were embroidered the loves of Venus, Cleopatra lay in great magnificence, waited on by boys like Cupids, while her handmaidens, who were her sailors, pulled at the silken ropes until the great sails swelled and flared like flame above her head.

That night Cleopatra invited Antony to a great banquet, where she won his heart as she had won the heart of Cæsar before him; and Antony became her complete slave, forgetting all save his desire to serve and to be near this marvellous queen. Antony thought no more of his fellow triumvirs, to whom he owed the duty of safe keeping the great countries in his charge; he forgot his wife, Fulvia, or if thinking of her wished her dead, and spent his time revelling and feasting with Cleopatra. She, who saw that Antony was held in love of her, would laugh him in and out of patience; and once, while he was in his cups, she arrayed him for a jest in her mantles and head-dress, while she buckled to her waist his Roman sword. By her side the nights of Antony were made light with wine and revelry, but his days were spent in idle slumber and dull ease, ill fitting his great fame and his honour as a Roman general. For Antony, in his affection for Cleopatra, forgot his duties as a soldier and the care of the great countries that had been entrusted to him; and in his way of life, the ease in which he took his pleasure and the luxury that surrounded him, Antony became as womanly as the queen he loved.

The love-making of Antony and his utter subjection to the idlest whim of Cleopatra, were soon born to the ears of Octavius Cæsar and Marcus Lepidus, his fellow triumvirs, who were greatly angered by his misconduct. For Antony's lieutenants were more powerful in deed than their commander, who would, moreover, insult the messengers from Rome and pay but little heed to their most urgent tidings. Antony preferred to reel the streets of Alexandria at noon, brawling and exchanging buffets with the idle rogues that he encountered, and he cared not that his feasting and luxurious ways were the shame of his friends at Rome and had become the common theme of gossip in the Roman market-place. Antony's wild revels and carousings were the more marked and brought more sharply into public disfavour by his former greatness, for until he met with Cleopatra, he had been a skillful and brave commander, capable of any hardship, disdaining not the rudest berry on the roughest hedge for food, prepared to couch himself on flint and sleep there as in a bed of down, with action and purposes all strong and resolute, as befitted a great soldier.

If any time could have awakened Antony from his revels, affairs in Italy should then have called him thither, for Rome was threatened with the swords of civil war, and Cæsar and Lepidus were in sore need of the troops that Antony had with him in the east. The son of the great Pompey who had been Julius Cæsar's enemy, now threatened the triumvirs as his father had threatened Cæsar, and all discontented persons who hoped to repair their fortunes by a war, had flocked to Pompey's banner. Antony's wife, Fulvia, had raised an army against Cæsar, hoping by this means to call her lord from Egypt; but Fulvia had been stricken with a grievous illness and suddenly in the midst of her preparations she had died.

Word of these ill tidings came together to the court of Cleopatra, and Antony determined that he must break his strong Egyptian fetters, as he named her charms, and hasten to Italy, where the times, he said, cried out to him to leave his idle love-making. So Antony bade Cleopatra to use no means to withhold him for he would go; and he took his farewell fearfully lest even then she might dissuade him. For Cleopatra cared not if his Roman fortunes were destroyed forever so long as he remained with her and had the power to do her bidding in the east. She feared that if Antony departed, her control over him would be lost, and she sought to change his purpose with all her skill and all her arts. She said that eternity had spoken from their lips and eyes; that love such as theirs could bide no separation. When she found him still resolved in spite of all her pleadings, she wished him smooth success and laurelled victory, and bade him, although in anger and sadness, to leave her. And Antony left in haste, flying like a fugitive from Egypt, lest the persuasion of Cleopatra weaken him and force him to forego his purpose.

When Antony arrived at Rome, he found that his long continued absence and the evil repute that preceded him had harmed him not a little in all Roman eyes, while Cæsar was enraged to the point of taking up arms against him. Were it not for their common enemy, Pompey, Antony and Cæsar then and there would have made war upon each other, but Pompey had gained control of all the sea and was proud in his new strength. Antony and Cæsar, therefore, became reconciled, and to seal their revived friendship, Antony married Cæsar's sister, Octavia, a matron of high and noble character, ill suited to become the wife of such a reveller as Antony. For even then Antony was planning to acquit himself against Pompey with the utmost speed and return to the gorgeous pleasures of the east and to the arms of Cleopatra.

In the meanwhile, Cleopatra was love-sick and restless at the absence of her beloved Antony. She told her maids that she would drink mandragora and sleep till his return; yet how then, said she, might she hear about this paragon of men, his bearing, his words, his actions, how he appeared and what he spoke; for the slightest thing when graced by his dear presence became, she said, a matter for an empire. Cleopatra sent to Antony each day a troop of messengers with letters for him, saying that she would unpeople Egypt before he should lack many daily greetings from her; and Antony sent to her a priceless pearl that he had kissed, with the message that her throne should be increased with conquered kingdoms, to mend what he was pleased to call the poorness of his present.

In such manner did Antony receive the renewed friendship and confidence of Cæsar, who had been willing to strengthen the bonds between them by the hand of his own sister, whom he loved tenderly.

For Antony had spoken to Cæsar so like his former self, with such apparent readiness of purpose and so many promises of reformation, that Cæsar had no thought of his future intentions, which he believed to be honourable. But the friends of both knew that Antony was still in Cleopatra's bondage, proposing to return to Egypt on his first opportunity; and they knew likewise that this would mean instant war between Cæsar and Antony, whose new relationship by marriage would become a very sword between them.

When Cleopatra learned that Antony had wedded Octavia, she was angered so greatly that she endeavoured to slay with her own hand the messenger who brought the tidings; but when she learned how this Octavia appeared — the colour of her hair and eyes, what were her years and features, she knew that such a wife could never keep her Antony away from Egypt. She determined that when Antony returned, she would confuse his senses with the utmost luxury until he could nevermore escape, even should he desire to; and she believed that if war should come between Cæsar and Antony, that with her aid Antony could overthrow his enemies and win a power even greater than before. Her days were spent in talking with her maidens of Antony's virtues, her nights in dreaming of Antony; and she fed her mind by night and day with love, as with delicious poison.

With Cæsar and Lepidus, in the meanwhile, Antony had prepared to overthrow the force of Pompey and regain control over the Roman empire. But conflict was no longer necessary, for when Pompey knew that Antony had joined the others against him instead of remaining idly in Egypt, he made peace with the triumvirs, for he knew likewise that Antony was a better general than either Cæsar or Lepidus, and he feared that against their triple strength his own power would be useless.

When peace was made, it was not long before Antony bade his wife Octavia farewell, saying falsely that he would go to the city of Athens, and he returned to Cleopatra to spend his time with her in feasts and revelry of such profuse extravagance that the like had never been beheld. Antony caused himself and Cleopatra to be publicly enthroned on chairs of gold, making her absolute queen of the dominions that had been entrusted to his care. Not only did he break all promises to Cæsar and with his own hand sever all ties that bound him to his country, but he demanded money from the eastern kingdoms and prepared for war with Rome, showing in all his deeds how far he had been betrayed from his former self.

All this while Antony became more and more bound in his love to Cleopatra, and indeed it was nothing but his blind affection for her that had caused him to become a stranger to his honour and his patriotism. Love had overpowered all his senses. His skill as a commander, his soldierly pride and judgment forsook him. His thoughts, that should have been directed to the war that threatened him, hung on Cleopatra; and to all appearance he cared little that Cæsar with a powerful force of soldiers had come into the east to conquer him, for he believed that with Cleopatra to aid him, Cæsar would be driven back to Rome.

In spite of the entreaties of his lieutenants, Antony conceived the mad purpose of fighting Cæsar by sea instead of by land; and this intent showed plainly that his former skill in war had been destroyed. For the Roman fleet was infinitely stronger than Antony's, with experienced seamen and captains, while the Egyptian vessels were manned for the most part by reapers or ploughmen, slaves who were unused to ships and soldiers, who while brave on land would lose their courage in the untried action of a fight at sea. Also Cleopatra determined to be present in her own galley at this conflict — an act unheard of in the customs of war and greatly disapproved by Antony's commanders, who feared, not without cause, that Antony might be distracted by her presence until his fleet should suffer as a consequence. But Antony, however, would hear no reasons to the contrary, and accompanied by Cleopatra prepared to meet Cæsar in a naval engagement.

How far Antony's commanders had been justified in their fears was soon beheld, for in the terrible encounter with the Roman vessels, while the conflict was at height, before advantage had been given to either side, Cleopatra took fright at the confusion of battle, which was new and fearful to her, and she sailed away with all her vessels, leaving Antony to overcome his enemies as best he might without her further aid. When the ships of Cleopatra had departed, the Roman fleet soon began to prevail over the lessened number of their enemies, and it was plain to see that Cæsar would be victorious.

But a calamity even more terrible than Cleopatra's flight had befallen the ill-fated ships of Antony, for Antony himself, when he saw the retreating sails of the Egyptians, showed the complete ruin that Cleopatra's magic had wrought within him, and to his eternal disgrace followed her out of the conflict, leaving his fleet without an admiral at the mercy of the Roman vessels. By this act Antony not only undid the fame that he had won in many battles, but lost forever his chance to defeat Cæsar. For many kings that would have remained loyal to Antony in case of his success, now offered their allegiance to Cæsar, while many of Antony's own officers and soldiers deserted in shame and anger to the Roman ranks.

In this way did the strength of Antony's blind love which was akin to madness work the complete ruin of his fortunes. But after flying from his enemies, Antony seemed to awaken as from a dream to a sense of his past conduct. In bitter shame he called his friends about him, bidding them to fly and save themselves, for by his own example, as he said in sorrow, he had taught them how to turn their shoulders to a foe; and he blamed himself so pitifully that all who heard him were compelled to weep and wonder at the ruins of his former self; Cleopatra herself wept and begged him to forgive her, saying she little thought he would have followed when she fled.

Antony bade Cleopatra, although with tenderness, to be ashamed for leaving him in such a manner. He said that she knew his sword had become weak through love of her alone and that he would follow where she led, even against the bidding of the gods. But when Cleopatra made as though she would weep again, Antony could blame her no longer and bade her kiss him, saying that such a kiss repaid him utterly for all that he had lost, and he called for food and wine with a sad attempt at cheerfulness, commanding his dismayed followers to be merry in spite of their ill fortunes.

To Cæsar Antony sent a messenger who in his own person showed the pitiful state to which his lord had fallen, for while Antony could once have ordered kings to do his bidding, this messenger was no other than a poor schoolmaster, who begged of Cæsar that Antony should be allowed to live in Egypt, or if not, that he might retire to Athens and remain there, a private citizen.

Cleopatra also sued for favours from Cæsar, and she worded her message in most gracious terms, acknowledging his greatness. She said that she craved of him her kingdom for her heirs, for that in Cæsar's voice she heard the doom of Egypt; and she framed this message in such manner that Cæsar believed she was prepared to forsake Antony. Cæsar was partly right in this surmise, for Cleopatra would indeed have been both ready and willing to keep her power through his love could she have won it, even as she had ruled through Antony's affection. And while she was not yet prepared to forsake Antony, she smoothed her way with Cæsar with her utmost skill, and it was plain to see that when he finally should triumph, she would turn to him for favour.

Cæsar replied that for Antony's request he had no ears. If Cleopatra would renounce her disgraced friend and slay him, or at least drive him from Egypt, he would consider what she asked him. Cæsar also sent an officer named Thyreus to Cleopatra in the endeavour to win her away from Antony, and with smooth words Thyreus tempted her until she sent by him another gracious message to Cæsar.

It chanced, however, that when Thyreus prepared to leave her he begged her hand to kiss, and Cleopatra gave it to him, saying that it was a hand that Julius Cæsar and the great Pompey had often stooped to honour. But while Thyreus bent over her hand, Antony came before them, and beholding Cæsar's messenger in such favour he partly realized Cleopatra's faithlessness. Antony cried out in grief and anger, demanding of Cleopatra how she dared to stoop so low as to bestow upon a servant, his own playfellow, her hand — that kingly seal and plighter of high hearts. He commanded his attendants to bear Thyreus from his presence and whip him until he cried aloud for mercy; and turning to Cleopatra, Antony gazed on her in a terrible manner and asked if he had sacrificed his fame in Rome, forsaken all his fortunes and forborne the getting of a lawful race by a gem of women to be made at last the rival of a slave in the pay of Cæsar. When the attendants returned with Thyreus, Antony said to him that the next time a lady's hand should fever him, he would do well to shake with fear in looking on it; and he bade Thyreus return with his stripes to Cæsar, and bear him word of his entertainment.

Cleopatra, however, with words of affection contrived to soothe the angered heart of Antony — an easy task, when Antony did so desire to believe in her true love. For as a flame will flicker into life before it dies, men in evil fortune entertain wild hopes that never can come true, and Antony now was ready both to believe Cleopatra and to think that he could conquer the army arrayed against him. He prepared for a final encounter with Cæsar and called his disheartened followers about him to spend one more night together in revelry and drown their fears in drinking to the battle that was imminent.

That night, while Antony and his lieutenants were carousing, a sign of his approaching ruin was given to the soldiers of his guard without the palace. For a noise as of music filled the air, and muffled drums and hautboys sounded underneath the earth. The sounds grew dim in distance until they faded into silence, and the soldiers said in fear that they were caused by the great god Hercules whom Antony had loved, and they signified, said the soldiers, that Hercules was leaving Antony to his fate. When the soldiers approached others who were on guard in different places about the palace it seemed that all had heard the unearthly music, and everywhere it had waned and died away as though played by someone taking leave of them.

The fighting that followed between Antony and Cæsar was brief and final; for while Antony at first seemed to conquer, Cæsar soon prevailed. And now a further proof was given to Antony of Cleopatra's hollowness, for again her Egyptian vessels that were to aid him in his battle which was partly fought by sea gave way speedily, surrendering to Cæsar; and the sailors of both fleets shouted in joy, more like friends that met after a time of separation than enemies that had contended against each other.

Antony was resolved bitterly to upbraid Cleopatra who had a second time been false to him, and when he saw her she had become so hateful to his eyes that he warned her away quickly lest he should blemish Cæsar's triumph by slaying her. He called her the greatest spot of all her sex, most terrible and monster-like to have betrayed him; and his rage increasing almost to madness, he could no longer withhold his vengeance but resolved to follow her and slay her.

Cleopatra, in the utmost terror at his anger, fled with her women into one of the great monuments of stone that were near her palace, and there she barred herself so that Antony might not follow her. She sent to Antony a slave who was to tell him that his anger had made her do the deed that he intended, for that she had taken her own life; and she bade the slave to word his message piteously, thinking that when Antony should hear this false report, his anger would give way to instant grief, and then learning the truth, he would do nothing but rejoice that she was still alive.

Cleopatra's deception, however, had an effect far different from what she had believed, and with most fatal consequence to Antony; for when he learned of her death, although he himself had purposed to effect it, he could no longer bear to live but stabbed himself with his own sword; and learning before he died that Cleopatra still was living, he was carried, mortally hurt, to the monument where she had taken refuge. For the tidings of her death had completely reawakened his great love.

There Antony was lifted to Cleopatra's side, and lay dying with her arms about him; and as he died, he bade her with his last breath to seek her safety from Cæsar. And Antony begged her never to remember him as he was then — crushed, despised and at the point of death, but to think of him as he had been in former days when he first loved her,— strong to give her what she wished and powerful in pride with all the eastern world at his command. Then the tormented heart of Antony could bear no more and in the midst of his words he became silent; even his love could no longer withhold the death that was swiftly coming upon him, and he died.

Cleopatra did not long survive Antony, for when she knew that Cæsar was resolved to bear her as a captive to Rome and lead her through the open streets in his triumph, she also determined to end her life; and she caused a slave to bring her in secret a snake that was called the asp, whose sting is almost instantly fatal to its victims, causing them to die as though they fall into a sudden slumber with no pain. Cleopatra laid one of these snakes upon her breast, keeping it there until she seemed to fall asleep; and her handmaidens did likewise; and when the guard came upon them, only one of her attendants remained alive, who breathed out faintly that such a death was well and fitting for a princess like her mistress, who was descended from so long a line of royal kings.

There remained nothing for Cæsar but to perform the funeral rites of Cleopatra and of his former friend and confederate, Antony, and Cæsar laid them together in one tomb so that Antony might sleep forever in the presence of the queen whom he had loved so well.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

IN the days when the state of Rome had been changed from a republic to an empire, and when the city, robbed of its ancient power, was beset by many enemies, there lived a Roman general whose name was Titus Andronicus. Andronicus was the bravest soldier and the most respected citizen of his time, beloved alike for his integrity, his patriotism and his knowledge of the art of war. His skill as a soldier had recently overcome a people called the Goths, who were bitter and dangerous enemies to the Roman state; moreover he had captured a Gothic queen called Tamora, bringing her with her three sons as prisoners to Rome, where the people rejoiced greatly at the triumph of their beloved general. For the Romans, who had lost their former strength at arms, knew only too well that their present success was wholly due to the wisdom and indomitable courage of Andronicus.

Of a great many sons that Andronicus had reared to become soldiers, all but four had perished on the battle-field, and more than one had been slain in the very war whence Andronicus with his four surviving sons were now returning victorius into the city. These four sons were called Lucius, Martius, Quintus and Mutius, their names being as similar as they themselves were alike in the soldierly qualities that they inherited from their noble father. With their father they were given a warm welcome by the Roman people, who beheld in them the virtues of Andronicus and regarded them with him as the deliverers of Rome from a great and terrible calamity.

It remained for this brave general to perform the funeral rites of his slain sons, whose bodies had been brought with sorrow into the city. In accordance with the ancient custom that called for a sacrifice at the funeral of Roman soldiers, the sons of Andronicus demanded of their father the most noble of his prisoners, saying that they would slay him to appease the spirits of their brothers that might not (as they believed) enter in the lower world until their funeral obsequies had been performed. Andronicus therefore gave up for sacrifice the prisoner, Alarbus, the eldest son of Tamora, the unhappy queen whom he had captured. And when this queen with tears begged for her son's life, Andronicus bade her spare her useless entreaties, for Alarbus had been marked for a religious offering and must die.

Lucius and his brothers then conveyed Alarbus to a funeral pyre, where they slew him with their swords and gave his body to the flames. They then returned into their father's presence with bloodied weapons, bidding him mark how they had performed their Roman rites.

When Tamora and her surviving sons knew that Alarbus had been put to death, they resolved if ever they should gain their liberty, fully to requite his fate upon the family and kinsmen of Andronicus, and to include in their revenge all that bore that name, even his most remote relatives, for they believed the blood of all his family would be a scant return for Tamora's beloved and valiant son, Alarbus. Demetrius, who was now her eldest, bade his mother remember the time when she had been a queen instead of a despised captive and thinking on it be resolved to revenge her wrongs upon her enemies. Demetrius bade her hope that such a time might befall her soon, telling her that the gods who armed the queen of Troy for vengeance might favor the queen of Goths with a like opportunity.

While the war against the Goths had been in progress, the emperor of Rome had died, and dispute had at once arisen as to who should succeed him on the throne. For the emperor had left two sons who were contending for their father's title. The eldest of these, who was named Saturninus, claimed that the empire was his by right of birth, while Bassianus, his younger brother, thinking himself more loved among the people than Saturninus, demanded that the Romans should choose their ruler by a popular election; and the friends and retainers of these two brothers went about the streets in arms, prepared to do battle with each other on the slightest opportunity.

But when Andronicus with his army arrived in the city, the rival claimants for the empire, fearing the people's anger, allowed the justice of their cause to be decided by the Roman citizens; and as it chanced neither of them was to be favoured by the people's choice, who named for the proud office of emperor no other than Andronicus himself. And the people sent to Andronicus a white robe in token of their decision, telling him that he was chosen as a candidate with Saturninus and Bassianus. And it was plainly to be perceived that Andronicus would triumph in the election over the late emperor's two sons, who had disputed so angrily that the people's displeasure was awakened against them.

Andronicus, however, who was old, and wearied by the severe life of a soldier that he had led for forty years, did not desire the mighty power that the people wished to confer on him. At the best, he said, his rule could last but a short period of time, as his life, now almost at an end, must soon be spent, and leave that mighty office open again to further disputes such as had lately arisen. He asked the people if they would allow him to choose who should be their emperor, saying, when they consented, that he wished them to observe the right of Saturninus, their emperor's eldest son, whose virtues, as he hoped, would bring to Rome the utmost happiness. And the people, on learning the desire of Andronicus, created Saturninus as their emperor.

When Saturninus heard Andronicus speak of him in so generous a manner and when he knew that through the efforts of this general his title so long and so eagerly desired had been attained at last, he was to all appearance overcome with the deepest gratitude, and offered, both as a reward for Andronicus' gentleness and to advance his family in Rome, to wed Lavinia, the only daughter of Andronicus, and make her, as he said, Rome's empress and the mistress of his own affections. Andronicus joyfully consented to this proposal, and in honour of the marriage he gave to Saturninus all the prisoners that he had taken, with his chariot and armour, and all the spoils of the late war against the Goths. Saturninus was rejoiced to have as his own prisoner the Gothic queen whose beauty he greatly admired, and he told her that she should be used with all respect and ceremony. Saturninus then prepared to wed Lavinia, calling his friends to witness the marriage about to be performed.

Lavinia, however, was loved by the emperor's brother, Bassianus, and loved him in return. When Bassianus knew that Saturninus not only had taken from him his chance to become emperor but was about to do him even greater injury by marrying Lavinia, he determined to fly with Lavinia from the emperor's presence and marry her before his brother could prevent him. And Bassianus was aided in his purpose by the four sons of Andronicus, who had known of his betrothal to their sister, and were unwilling that she should become the bride of Saturninus.

Accordingly, Bassianus with Lavinia fled suddenly from the emperor's presence, and when Andronicus and the emperor in great anger attempted to follow, the sons of Andronicus opposed them and a brawl was started, wherein Andronicus slew his son, Mutius, who had attempted to bar his way with drawn sword. And while this quarrel was in progress, Bassianus and Lavinia effected their escape and were privately married.

As there was a law in Rome that gave to any father the power of life and death over his children, Andronicus could not be punished for his rash and terrible action in slaying Mutius; and he had, indeed, done this in a heat of rage, and in the service of his emperor; and Mutius in opposing his own father had committed in all Roman eyes a crime far greater than that of Andronicus in slaying him. But the utmost grief was shown for the unfortunate Mutius who had returned from triumphant wars to fall disgracefully in a city brawl by the hand of his own father.

Saturninus, however, was secretly rejoiced in what had just occurred. for the beauty of queen Tamora, who was his prisoner, had aroused in him a sudden and violent flame of love that made him wholly unwilling to wed Lavinia as he had promised. And the emperor showed great anger against Andronicus, saying that the flight of Lavinia had been contrived by Andronicus himself to make of him, Saturninus, a mock in the eyes of all the assembled multitude. He said that he desired no longer to espouse Lavinia or to have any further dealings with Andronicus who had so basely betrayed him, and forgetting that he owed his throne and all his high position to Andronicus, Saturninus accused him openly of treachery and secretly prepared to be revenged upon him. And Saturninus said that instead of Lavinia, whom he now scorned, he would take for his bride the Gothic queen who had been his prisoner, and he married Tamora with pomp and great magnificence.

By this strange turn of fortune, Tamora became empress over the people who lately had beheld her in chains as the prisoner of Andronicus.

Tamora bore in mind the words of her son Demetrius, and saw now that the opportunity she desired to injure Andronicus had been given her. She persuaded her new husband to make a pretence of forgiving him, saying that Saturninus had but lately come to his new honour and that the people even now might turn against him and place Andronicus upon the throne. If Saturninus would have patience, she continued, she would find a way to work the complete ruin of Andronicus and all his family, to whom she had pleaded vainly for the life of her dear son. In the presence of Andronicus, Tamora then bade her lord to be reconciled with him, saying that as she had become a Roman through her marriage with the emperor, she was resolved to forget all former quarrels, and turning with an assumed kindness of manner to Andronicus she entreated his friendship. The open-hearted Andronicus possessed the blunt honesty of an old soldier, and was more used to severe battle with his foes than to intrigues such as Tamora had prepared against him. He believed her words and was rejoiced at the change that had again befallen Saturninus, who now entreated his friendship and besought his pardon. Andronicus replied that new life was infused in him by the happy reconciliation with his lord and ruler; and through all the city the marriages of Tamora and Lavinia were celebrated with feasting and revelry by the emperor's decree.

Tamora had been accompanied to Rome by a Moor named Aaron who had likewise been taken prisoner by Andronicus, and Aaron was fast held in the affections of his royal mistress, who, indeed, entertained a secret love for him that was unknown to her husband, Saturninus. This Moor, who was a wicked and hard-hearted man, aided the queen in her purpose of revenge upon Andronicus, conceiving a plan of great cruelty to bring misfortune upon his children. For Aaron plotted that Bassianus should be murdered by Tamora's two sons, and he devised a plan whereby the guilt of this crime should be fixed upon the sons of Andronicus.

There was a forest near Rome where game was known to be plentiful, and the emperor intended to go hunting there on the day following his marriage with Queen Tamora. This hunt was a part of the wedding festivities and was to be the occasion of great pleasure and rejoicing; all the emperor's friends and followers had been invited, and Tamora with Aaron had made certain that Andronicus with his sons, and Lavinia and Bassianus all intended to be present. For in this forest Aaron and Tamora intended to revenge themselves upon Andronicus.

For the completion of his design, Aaron had written a letter that spoke of Bassianus' murder and of a reward to be gained for committing it. The letter told also of a remote part of the forest where the reward had been secreted, and Aaron had concealed a bag of gold in the exact place and manner that the letter had described, giving the letter to Tamora who was to deliver it to Saturninus as though she had discovered it by chance. Bassianus was to be lured to the place where the reward was hidden and murdered there. And Aaron had contrived that Martius and Quintus, Andronicus' two sons, were to be discovered with the slain

Bassianus, so that the emperor would be forced to believe that they were guilty of the murder. All was now prepared for Aaron to complete the villainy that he intended, for Bassianus and Lavinia who were enjoying the pleasures of the hunt, had wandered far away from the emperor's party and came upon the lonely place where Aaron had contrived his design against them. There they encountered Tamora, who was to engage them in a quarrel until Demetrius and Chiron, her two sons, should fall upon them with their swords and murder Bassianus.

Tamora spoke scornfully to them, calling Bassianus an unmannerly intruder for following her, as she accused him, to the remote spot where she had been discovered. When Bassianus replied with bitter words in which Lavinia joined him, a quarrel soon arose, and Bassianus accused Tamora of treachery to her own husband, saying that he would acquaint the emperor with her faithlessness. Demetrius and Chiron then came suddenly upon them and attacked Bassianus, who, taken unawares, had no chance to defend himself and soon was slain. His body was then concealed in a deep pit overgrown with vines and brambles and the murderers fled from the place, taking Lavinia with them as their prisoner.

In the meanwhile Aaron had gone in search of Martius and Quintus, whom he persuaded to accompany him, by telling them of a sleeping panther that easily might fall a prey before their weapons; and he enticed them to the place where the murdered Bassianus lay concealed. And before they knew where he was leading them, Martius stumbled and fell headlong into the pit that was so covered with the forest growth that he had not perceived it, until his feet had been betrayed into its depth; and while he was struggling to free himself, he beheld the body. Quintus, who had seen him fall, cried out to know if he were injured; and Martius replied with horror, " O brother, I am hurt with the most dismal sight that ever grieved my eyes. Look down into this den and behold it. Poor Bassianus lies here murdered."—" Reach me your hand," said Quintus, " so I may help you out, or wanting strength be buried with you in this dreadful grave." When he endeavoured to pull his brother from the gulf, he found the task was utterly beyond his power, and Quintus also slipped and fell and both were imprisoned without hope of rescue. For Aaron, who had seen them fall, made haste to bring the emperor to the spot who beheld Martius and Quintus in the pit where lay the body of Bassianus.

Hardly had Saturninus learned of his brother's terrible death, when Tamora came upon them, crying out with great appearance of distress, "Where is Bassianus," and she gave to the emperor the letter that disclosed the pretended plot. And when they looked for the reward of gold, they found it beneath an elder-tree as the letter had described. And nothing could persuade the emperor that Martius and Quintus were not guilty of his brother's murder.

As a punishment for this crime, Martius and Quintus were sentenced to be put to death, and neither their father's entreaties nor their own great service to their country in the Gothic wars could effect their pardon. For the emperor and all the people were enraged at the base murder of Bassianus, and the plot had been so cleverly contrived that all believed it had been committed by the two unhappy men whom Aaron had betrayed. And Martius and Quintus were put to death with the law's utmost severity, while Tamora's two sons rejoiced greatly in the fate that had overtaken them — still more, in the sorrow that had been caused to their unhappy father. For Andronicus grieved for Martius and Quintus more than for all the courageous sons that he had lost in battle, who had died, as he said of them, in honour and bravery, while their two brothers were put to death in shame by the hands of their fellow citizens. Even another sorrow had befallen Andronicus, for Lucius, his only surviving son, was banished from the Roman dominions for attempting to rescue his condemned brothers.

In the meanwhile, the wickedness of Tamora and her two sons had been revealed to Andronicus. After Lavinia had been taken prisoner by Demetrius and Chiron, she was subjected by them to cruel tortures that deprived her, as they believed, of any power to injure them when she should be set at liberty; but Lavinia contrived to disclose to her father both the manner of her own cruel fate and how her husband, Bassianus, had been murdered; and she succeeded in revealing to him also that Demetrius and Chiron were the authors of these crimes, so that Andronicus could be revenged upon them.

When Andronicus knew that Tamora's sons had been the cause of all his sorrow he prepared to overwhelm them with a misfortune fully as terrible as his own, and to include in his revenge the heartless queen who had encouraged them, also the emperor, Saturninus, for ordering the death of his two sons, innocent of the crime for which they suffered. Andronicus therefore invited Tamora and the emperor to a great feast, where he intended to destroy them, and he enticed them thither by saying that his son Lucius would be present.

When Lucius had been banished, he fled to the country of the Goths who had been his recent enemies, and they, who knew to their cost his skill and bravery as a soldier were more than willing that he lead their army against Rome, where Lucius was determined to place his father or himself in full control over the Roman state.

Tamora was well aware of this, and also that Lucius with his hostile power even then was near the city gates; she had determined to slay Lucius at the banquet and to kill Andronicus himself there, and she believed that Andronicus, by giving this feast and causing Lucius to leave his army and come unguarded into Rome, had betrayed himself and Lucius into her hands. Andronicus had feigned a strange disorder of mind the more thoroughly to deceive her, and Tamora did not dream that the feast was only a ruse on his part to entice her and the emperor into his house.

Before the hour of the banquet, Andronicus contrived to bring Demetrius and Chiron into his power which was easy for him to do as they were unaware that he had discovered their guiltiness; he said that unless they aided him in his preparations for the banquet he would refuse to summon Lucius into Rome, and they, who knew the plot to murder Lucius, attempted to further it by consenting to whatever Andronicus demanded. And when Demetrius and Chiron came within the house of Andronicus, they were set upon and bound by his retainers; and Andronicus then slew them, saying that their death could only partially repay the murder of his sons, and the injuries they worked upon Lavinia.

When the emperor and Tamora came to the banquet, Andronicus made known to them that he had killed Demetrius and Chiron and suddenly uplifting his sword he said that Tamora, the partner of their guilt, should not survive them; and he slew the wicked queen with his own hand as he had slain her sons before her. And when in the confusion that followed, Andronicus was himself killed by Saturninus, Lucius, who had left his army and hurried into Rome, attacked the emperor with such violent anger that Saturninus could not withstand him but fell beneath his sword. And in this terrible manner the family of the brave Andronicus came to an end. They did not die, however, before a complete revenge had been worked upon their enemies, for even Aaron, the Moor, was captured and put to death by Lucius. And Lucius was proclaimed the emperor of Rome, succeeding Saturninus to that power; and the Romans in acclaiming him their ruler did so no more for his own sake than out of respect for the memory of his brave father, whose unhappy death was greatly lamented by them all.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN

JOHN, a wicked and hard-hearted prince, came to rule over the English people on the death of his brother Richard; and possessing none of Richard's virtues, soon was feared and hated throughout his entire kingdom. For John would take delight in working injury on his unhappy subjects, who were withheld by force of arms alone from rising in rebellion against him. He would tax them unjustly and afflict them with inhuman punishments; the dismal terrors of his prisons were rivalled only by the wickedness of his court, where no man was safe from the evil passions that awaited, like attendant devils, on their lord and master, the king. There were many also who believed that John had usurped the title of king that he so misused from his young nephew, Arthur, for Arthur was son to John's elder brother, and therefore, as many wise persons claimed in secret, should have worn the crown before his most unnatural uncle. Arthur, moreover, who was but a child, possessed a gentle and sunny nature, far removed from the gloomy temper of the tyrant, John.

Arthur's claim to the English kingdom afforded to the king of France, whose name was Philip, a pretext to interfere in English affairs, and seek excuse thereby for making war and increasing his own power and dominion. The lady Constance, Arthur's mother, continually besought Philip to direct his armies against England, until her son should be made lord and king of it; and Philip saw in Arthur's title to the crown, fair opportunity. Philip sent an imperious message to King John, demanding him to render up his borrowed majesty to Arthur, his nephew. Should John refuse, said Philip, the proud control of bloody war should force him to the will of France.

But John, like many other tyrants, having no good affections and no generous and kindly virtues wherein most men are wont in some degree to take their pleasure, held his crown more precious on this account, esteeming his high power all the more dear as he put it to baser usage. When John received this message from the French, he assembled in rage as many soldiers as he could call together, resolving to make King Philip bitterly repent his rash intrusion. And John's invading army reached France as soon as Philip's own ambassador, who was returning in hot haste to bid his king beware of England's approaching power, for John had warned this lord to be as swift as lightning in the eyes of France, or the English swords should be their own wrathful messengers. With John came his mother, the proud Elinor, and his niece the lady Blanche of Spain; for at such a time it was no way unusual for ladies of high rank to attend their lords on their adventures over seas; and they were accompanied by an army of fiery soldiers,— youths with ladies' faces but fierce dragons' spleens, who were resolved to win their fortunes by their swords. This assemblage of rash and dauntless spirits came on King Philip without the walls of Angiers, a town that Philip purposed to besiege until its citizens, who were English subjects, should hail young Arthur as their king.

Ere the two armies should meet in battle, these warlike rulers themselves met before the city walls, and at this meeting were present all who were concerned in any manner with their quarrel — the boy Arthur with his mother Constance, Elinor and the lady Blanche, the French prince who was called the dauphin, and many statesmen of both kingdoms.

The bitterness between John and Philip, however, was rendered, if possible, even sharper by this encounter, where an unseemly wrangle took place between Queen Elinor and Constance. For each of these mothers, in seeking to behold her own son king of England, could invent no taunt or reproach too bitter for her rival, until Arthur himself begged them to desist, saying that such hard words ill become their kinship and that he was little worth the broil that had arisen over his title; and the unhappy child wished that he were laid low in his grave, so that he might escape the rank contention caused by his noble birth, which was, he said, no fault of his, who had not power to shape his destiny.

Philip, who wished to put an end to the dispute, which John's swift action had made him suddenly eager to conclude, proposed that quarrel should be laid in its entirety before the citizens of Angiers, saying, that they should speak whose title they admitted, Arthur's or John's; and he bade his trumpeters to summon the citizens to the walls where he would parley with them.

When the townsmen came to the parley, John artfully addressed them, commanding them to throw open their gates to him, their rightful king; while Philip bade them pay the duty that they truly owed, to Arthur, who, as king of England, was lord of their fair city.

The townsmen, however, would acknowledge the title of neither, saying that their claims appeared so equal, that Angiers for the present should be closed against them both. When it should be decided who might truly be England's king, then, said these prudent citizens, they would freely acknowledge him their lord. Until that time, however, their strong gates were to be barred against the world.

There was then no other course but for John and Philip to decide their claims by battle and their armies immediately advanced upon each other in conflict; but their forces were so evenly matched that neither side could win advantage, and after a bloody battle, French and English came again before the walls of Angiers, each side claiming victory and demanding that the city gates now be thrown open to their cause.

The townsmen, however, still refused to admit them, saying that from their towers they had beheld the onset and retire of both armies, where blows had answered blows and power confronted power. To the demands of John and Philip, they replied that until the issue be more certainly decided, they should hold their gates fast locked, and admit neither.

Among the nobles who attended John was a knight, whose father had been no other than the former mighty king, Richard the Lion-hearted. This knight, who was born out of wedlock, could never inherit any of the titles that had formerly belonged to his great father, but being a fierce and resolute soldier with a thirst for wild adventure, he had become a powerful adviser of King John and a commander in the English army. Richard, for so he was called, proposed an issue from the difficulty that suited well his own rash temper, saying that both French and English should proclaim a truce and jointly bend their sharpest deeds of malice on the town that defied them. When Angiers lay in dust, there would then be time to part their mingled colours in angry war, until one side, favoured by fortune, should gain victory. The rival kings liked this counsel well, and agreed for the while to knit their powers, level Angiers to the ground and then renew their wars upon each other. But the townsmen were much dismayed and not without cause, at hearing this bloody proposal, which would mean, whatever the outcome of the battle, that Angiers must lie in ruins. Accordingly, their wits made sharp by danger to themselves, they hit on a plan whereby peace could be gained not only for their city, but for France and England as well.

They bade the kings hear them, saying that their city might be won without stroke or wounds and all the breathing lives that come as sacrifices for their wars likewise be rescued. And they bade both John and Philip to look on the lady Blanche, the niece of John, and on Lewis the dauphin, Philip's son; where beauty, youth and rich estate were all complete save in the union of their marriage. Let them wed, said the men of Angiers, and all the contending powers would be united, the city gates unlocked as though by magic and the banners of both armies furled in peace. And John knew that in this match lay his most certain safety, while Philip was not loath to wed his son to a lady of such wealth and power as Blanche.

In the wedding, therefore, these kings believed they had effected a happy compromise, whereby each side should benefit, and the bells of Angiers rang out joyfully, proclaiming peace, good union of the hostile armies and a marriage that gave promise of all faith and true alliance.

But Constance, Arthur's mother, remained angry and sorrowful in her tent, for by this peace her cause had been forsaken and Arthur forever barred and disinherited from his kingdom. Looking on Arthur, who bade his mother be content with her ill fortune, Constance said that were he grim, ugly and slanderous to her that bore him, lame and foolish, or patched with foul, unsightly marks, he would then disgrace his noble birth and be unworthy of the name of king. But Arthur, as she said, was fair and kind of heart, and at his birth Nature had joined with Fortune to make him great. Of Nature's gifts he could boast with the lily and the half-blown rose, while his inner self was of a rare and winning gentleness. And Constance, with noble dignity, bade King Philip to think shame for thus deserting her, to conclude false amity and painted peace with the evil-hearted John.

Philip, however, was not long to benefit by this alliance, for John had incurred the anger of the pope of Rome, whose legate came upon him even while the lady Constance spoke these bitter words. This deputy, a cardinal named Pandulph, pronounced Rome's curse upon the English kingdom, saying that John was excommunicate, and in all England the mass should be unsaid, the church bells silent, the dead unburied, or laid within their graves without a single prayer for their departed souls; blessed should be the subjects that revolted from John's power, while the assassin who might strike him dead, or end by any secret course his hateful life, should be worshipped as a saint. And Pandulph bade King Philip leave the hand and the alliance of the heretic and traitor, John, for otherwise, said he, France too should fall beneath the most severe displeasure and the blighting ban of Rome.

Philip feared the anger of the pope even more than further battle with the English, and he told King John that he did now renounce his proffered friendship; and John and Philip became again embattled enemies, further conflict coming to pass between them.

Here and now misfortune came to the unhappy Constance and a terrible fate befell her innocent boy, Arthur, who was captured by John's soldiers and taken prisoner to England. And John himself returned in triumph to his country, believing that as he was now the master of Arthur's fate, he could command the destinies of his own.

It was not to be thought that John would forego the advantage gained in such manner over his enemies; and thinking only how Arthur's title had awakened angry war, and how the boy was, as he expressed it, a serpent in his path, over whose dead body only could he pass to safety, John concluded, therefore, to murder Arthur within the secrecy of his prisons. John had a retainer whose name was Hubert de Burgh, to whom he deputed the carrying out of his evil intent upon his nephew; and he conceived a vengeance to be worked on Arthur that is almost unbelievable, for not content with putting him to death, he gave Hubert a written warrant attached with the royal seal, commanding that Arthur's eyes be burned with red hot irons; and while it is incredible to think that any man, however monstrous, should undertake so foul an errand, Hubert actually prepared to afflict the tender prince with his abominable torture.

Hubert bade some rough men to attend him, and summoned Arthur to his presence; and Arthur, as was his custom, greeted Hubert cheerily for Hubert hitherto had always treated him with kindness. Beholding the fair child in such sad circumstance, Hubert was strangely affected by his youth and innocence, and was compelled to turn aside and weep, chiding the while the foolish and womanly tears that fell from his eyes. Arthur remarked on Hubert's sadness, who replied that indeed he had often been far merrier. He then gave Arthur the warrant and bade him read, asking with a show of gruffness if it were not fairly writ that Arthur took so long in gazing at it; and he told him to prepare, for there was no remedy, bidding his men approach, bind Arthur to a chair, and work their inhuman purpose upon him.

" Oh, Hubert," cried Arthur, " send these men away. I will not stir nor wince nor look upon the iron angerly. Thrust but these men away and I will forgive whatever torment you do put me to."

" Even though I send them forth," said Hubert, " you must prepare to lose your eyes."

" Oh, spare me," cried Arthur, " would there were but a mote in yours,— a grain, a speck of dust, a wandering hair; for then your vile intent must needs seem horrible! See, the iron is now cold and will not harm me! "

" But I can heat it, boy," said Hubert.

" No, in God's name you cannot! " cried Arthur. " The fire is dead with grief. Look, Hubert, there is no more malice in this burning coal. The breath of Heaven has blown its anger out and strewed repentant ashes on its head."

" But with my breath I can revive it," said Hubert.

" And if you do," replied Arthur, " you will but make it blush and glow with shame at your proceedings; nay, the fire will, perchance, sparkle in your eyes, who do kindle it against its will. All things you should use to wrong me, Hubert, will deny their office — only you who lack their mercy." And Arthur reminded Hubert of a time when he gave to him to bind his aching brows, his own best handkerchief — never so much as asking it again, although a princess had wrought it for him — and how one night, when Hubert was ailing, Arthur had soothed his head with his own hand and cheered the heavy time of pain until it passed.

Hubert could bear his words no longer and cried out for him to say no more, for he would not harm him — not for his uncle's wealth and all the riches in the world. He bade Arthur sleep secure, saying that he would guard him from all future danger and tell the king that his nephew had indeed been put to death; and Arthur thanked him tenderly, until Hubert commanded him to be silent and follow him into some secret place, for that he underwent much danger in sparing him.

John, in the meanwhile, had born himself so rashly against the people that they were on the point of overthrowing him; and several of his best advisers besought him to set young Arthur free, for, they said, if mischance should come to the innocent boy, and the people learned it, John's best fortunes would be ruined forever. John replied that he would do as they counselled and set Arthur at liberty, but even before their audience was over, Hubert came and whispered to him that Arthur was dead.

"My lords," said John, "over the laws of fate we have no power. Young Arthur is deceased to-night," and he turned pale when he beheld how all regarded him; for his noblemen, on hearing this news, fell from him with looks of horror, shrinking away as though from pestilence. John then turned on Hubert, who, he said, was the cause of all this mischief, and he called Hubert a bold villain who obeyed too eagerly all hints to crime and who had read into his royal words a meaning that was not there. He bade Hubert begone and never see him more, for he detested him; and he said that he had cause for wishing Arthur's death, but Hubert had none to kill him. It was ever the fate of kings, John said, to be attended thus by hateful fiends, who at a hint would pleasure their own evil hearts.

"Your majesty," said Hubert, "although I had your hand and seal for this foul work, I did it not. Young Arthur lives." He then told John how pity had withheld his hand and how Arthur lay concealed.

The king on hearing this, bade Hubert haste and tell the nobles that report had lied, and Hubert came upon them without the walls of Arthur's prison where they had gone in search of his body. But Hubert, on drawing near, saw that they wept and that their heads were bowed for grief; and he beheld amid them the lifeless body of Arthur. In terror at what had passed, the unhappy child had endeavoured to escape by leaping from the prison wall, whence he had fallen on cruel stones that killed him. But the noblemen who beheld Hubert approaching, trembled with abhorrence and drew their swords, for they believed that Hubert had been the instrument of Arthur's death. And still they wept, calling on Heaven to witness that so foul a deed had never seen its like upon the face of all the earth. Only one of them, King Richard's son, kept them from slaying Hubert, and Richard alone remained faithful to King John. For Hubert's own deep sorrow at beholding Arthur dead gave this lord to know that he was innocent. The rest, however, bore their swords and their allegiance to the king of France, and spread throughout the country the foul news of Arthur's murder.

When the people learned that Arthur had been made away with, as they believed by the hand of the king, his uncle, they rose in thousands against John, and they welcomed to their shores the invading fleet that France had sent to overthrow him. And the news of Arthur's death affected them in a strange and ominous manner, for the smith at his forge would pause in the middle of a blow to nod grimly and roll up his eyes at hearing of it, the tailor and tradesman would drop their work and rush out of doors to impart the news to all their neighbours; and men who passed through the streets would turn pale and draw their weapons when they heard.

John was still able, however, to collect an army, and some of his captains still remained unshaken from him. To strengthen himself, he summoned to him Cardinal Pandulph, the pope's legate who had laid his kingdom under a curse before the walls of Angiers, and John ignobly submitted himself through Pandulph to the law of Rome, so that the curse should be removed, for he knew that Pandulph would then bid the French withdraw their army from England.

The French, however, beholding England so nearly conquered, refused to obey the cardinal's order, and it surely seemed as though just retribution must overtake the English king. And John, in leading his army to the coming battle with the French was secretly poisoned, so that he lay helpless and dying of a burning fever while the French and his own revolted subjects triumphed in battle over the royal army. And the last words that fell upon John's ear were that his power was completely overthrown, and that the French and his subjects were everywhere victorious, having triumphed no more from their own strength than from hatred of him who opposed them; and in the death of this cruel king the fate of Arthur was in some measure revenged.

On hearing of John's death, the English concluded peace with their invaders, refusing, now that they were rid of the king they hated, to fight any longer against their countrymen. And the French, who had also suffered great reverses, were glad enough to return to their own country, knowing that they never could take England now that she had been freed from the affliction of the infamous King John.

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND

RICHARD the Second, king of England, possessed none of the great qualities that made his grandfather, King Edward, famous; for Richard did not seek to win renown in foreign wars, or to benefit his country with the contentment of a time of peace. While the English people should have prospered in the happy quiet that had befallen their country, Richard, their king, lived with idle and profuse extravagance, requiring great sums of money for his royal pleasures,— more, indeed, than Edward, his grandfather, would have needed to win victories in France. Richard seemed not content with squandering his own treasure, but sought to obtain gold by unjust means, for he would tax his subjects unlawfully, or call for loans that he intended never to repay. The gold that he obtained was soon dispelled as if in air, and the king of England seemed like a magician, who caused what he would touch to vanish from his hand, until the English people became angered that their country showed no visible or outward benefit from all this spending. As it is assured that a wicked king must ever reap the hatred of his subjects, a king who rules unwisely will surely win contempt that in the end may drive him from his throne; and the statesmen surrounding Richard feared for the future safety of their country, and their king. Most gravely of them all did Richard's uncle, John of Gaunt, fear for him — for John of Gaunt was a nobleman of age and deep experience who knew too well the outcome of such giddy and profuse extravagance as Richard's.

John of Gaunt had a son named Henry Bolingbroke who was of far different temper from his royal cousin, for Bolingbroke, although hasty in anger, was a soldier of vast courage, stern and resolute, skilled in the laws of government and greatly respected by the English people, who held King Richard in but light esteem.

And whether from loyalty to England or from secret designs of his own for future greatness, Bolingbroke did what lay in his power to win the love of all the people in the land.

It came to pass that Bolingbroke accused the Duke of Norfolk of treachery against King Richard, and before Richard himself, Bolingbroke declared his charges against Norfolk, who denied them utterly. The anger of these noblemen was so great, that in the presence of their sovereign they fell into a hot dispute, charging each other with bitter crimes and dangerous treason to their country, and each of them cast down his glove at the feet of his enemy in challenge to mortal combat. When the king attempted to check this unseemly quarrel, commanding them to make their peace, for he would have no civil bloodshed in his kingdom, Bolingbroke and Norfolk showed the slight regard in which they held him, by refusing to obey. They implored Richard to appoint a day when they might settle their dispute by strength of arms, which was believed at that time to be a certain means of learning the truth of any quarrel; and Richard at last appeared to consent to their request, so that these two hot-headed noblemen prepared to meet each other on horseback in deadly battle, armed from head to foot and bearing swords and lances, as their own high rank and all the rules of chivalry required.

But Richard, thinking how Bolingbroke and Norfolk had disregarded his own royal presence in their quarrel, and how their rage might in part be feigned to hide in themselves the very treason that so angrily they heaped upon each other, secretly determined that this combat never should take place between them, resolving to punish them as severely as their guilt, in his belief, should justify. So, when the two opponents armed at all points had entered in the lists and were awaiting the signal to begin their battle, Richard cast down his staff as a sign that they must cease, and he bade them lay aside their spears and helmets and hear what he had decreed. He pronounced on Bolingbroke the sentence of banishment, saying that for ten long years he must wander in foreign countries and turn his back upon the fair dominions of his native soil, where, said Richard, it would be death for him to return before the limit of his exile had expired. To the Duke of Norfolk, Richard then said his penalty was even heavier, and that he pronounced it on this account with some unwillingness: for Norfolk should become a hopeless exile, and the words "never to return" were breathed against him.

"A sentence," said Norfolk, "as heavy as unlooked for from your Highness' mouth, and I have deserved far better at your hands than to receive so deep a wound." For now that English was banished from his lips, he must forgo, he said, the use of speech, being too old to become a pupil; and his exile would be no better than a silent death, since he could hold no further converse with his countrymen or listen to the known and dear accents of his native tongue. But Bolingbroke, who had fair hopes of a return to England, received his sentence with less show of grief. Turning to the Duke of Norfolk, Bolingbroke bade him, now that he was an exile and could no longer fear the anger of the king, to confess his treason, saying that Norfolk had far to go, and bidding him bear not along the burden of a guilty heart.

Norfolk, however, replied that if he were a traitor, as Bolingbroke accused him, he wished his name to be blotted from the book of life and that he should be banished from heaven as well as from the country of his birth; and he said to Bolingbroke, "proud man, call me traitor if you will, but what you are, God, you and I do know, and all too soon, I fear, the king shall learn and have good reason to repent."

Norfolk then took his departure, bidding them all farewell with sorrowful words; and it seemed from the manner of his leave-taking that he was guiltless of the crimes that had been laid against him.

But the king, observing the troubled look of his uncle, John of Gaunt, whose sorrow at the banishment of his dear son was great and plain to see, said to him that his grieved aspect had plucked away four years from his son's banishment, and Bolingbroke might now return after six winters with welcome to his native country.

Old John of Gaunt, however, knew too well that before that time should pass, his life, far spent with age would be extinct; and to the king he said he could not hope to see his son again, calling his own life an oil-dried lamp that before long must flicker out in endless night. He bade his son farewell with much affection, bidding him regard his banishment as a willing journey undertaken with gladness and a happy heart, for sorrow, said this wise old man, weighs all the heavier when it is hardly borne; but when it is regarded lightly and suffered with a cheerful patience some of its harmful power is taken from it. And John of Gaunt concealed his own sorrow to cheer the departing steps of Bolingbroke; but none the less he was afflicted by the loss of his beloved son until he fell into a severe illness, and he knew that death at no long period must put an end to his unhappiness.

Before he died, John of Gaunt desired to chide the king for his reckless and unthrifty ways that must soon destroy his country and himself, for all the land was being laid in waste by the thoughtless extravagance of its spendthrift ruler. While Richard always had refused to hear advice, his uncle believed that such a warning, spoken from a bed of pain and grievous sickness, would have effect upon him, for he knew that the tongues of dying men enforce attention, and when words are scarce they seldom can be spent in vain. So John of Gaunt sent word to Richard that he lay dying, and besought the king to visit him before the brief remainder of his life was ended; and he spoke to Richard sternly of his gross folly, contrasting it with the great wisdom of the former king. He said that the waste caused by Richard was no whit less than the extent of his dominions, that a thousand flatterers attended him; that he himself who was about to die beheld the king who stood before him in a state of death even more terrible — as wide and far reaching as his dominions that were perishing from the neglect of their own ruler. When Richard in great anger threatened him for speaking so to his own sovereign, saying that were he not of kindred blood his head should pay the forfeit of such words, John of Gaunt bade Richard not to spare him on that account, for kindred blood he had already drunkenly caroused, meaning the Duke of Gloucester, his own brother and Richard's uncle, whom Richard had unjustly put to death. He bade his nephew to continue in his shame, but said that shame should not die with him in his grave, and that Richard would be forced to think upon his words and make them his tormentors in the future. The old man spoke no more, and word was soon brought to the king that John of Gaunt had died.

When Richard heard these too just words of blame, instead of taking them to heart or thinking of the consequence of his own acts that sooner or later must fall upon him, he fell into a rage against his uncle that was not allayed by hearing of his death. As if in defiance of the wise counsel that lately had been given him, he determined on an act of injustice greater than any he had ever yet committed — an outrage against his uncle who lay dead and against Bolingbroke, who by this time had departed in banishment. For a sudden revolt having arisen in Ireland, Richard knew not where to raise the money for a war against the Irish rebels, and he purposed to take John of Gaunt's estate,— all his lands and money, his horses and his silver, all that should have been inherited by Bolingbroke, and with this wealth the king prepared to muster an army and set sail for Ireland, hoping to overthrow the enemies that defied him.

There was great anger among the noblemen at this unjust and violent proceeding, and many sought to dissuade Richard from an act of such dishonour. The Duke of York, Richard's only uncle who now remained alive, warned him to desist, saying that such a deed must bear most bitter consequence against the king who lowered his great power to rob an absent and defenceless man. But Richard refused to regard this warning, and seized into his hands all that had been left to Bolingbroke by John of Gaunt;

and a number of noblemen determined now to serve no longer under such a tyrant as King Richard. Word was sent to Bolingbroke of what had taken place, and many fled to offer him their service, for it was soon rumoured that Bolingbroke was returning to England to revenge himself upon the king.

The report of Bolingbroke's return caused great dismay among the few persons that remained loyal to Richard — chiefly to his uncle, the Duke of York, who ruled the country while Richard was absent in Ireland. When the news was known to be true, and Bolingbroke was said to be collecting a mighty army, swollen alike by noblemen and peasants that rejoiced in the chance to overthrow the king they hated, even the Duke of York knew not where to turn for aid, or how to protect his country from the danger that was threatening it. For Richard had wrung from his dominions the last farthing that he could extort to lead his army into Ireland, and no money was to be had to meet a war against the might of Bolingbroke, to whose banners the English had flocked in prodigious numbers. And when King Richard made a quick return to England, he beheld that all his land rejoiced openly in the mischance that had come upon him: for even women had gone to the wars, and old men and boys had armed themselves against their king.

Now did the king remember the words of his late uncle, John of Gaunt. The flatterers that in more happy days had seemed to support his power now had fled and joined the army of his enemies. The noblemen whose greatness in the land was most complete, had likewise joined Bolingbroke. And Richard, when he asked for the Duke of York, into whose charge he had entrusted the whole of his kingdom, received a piece of news that showed him how irrevocably he was lost; for York himself had fled to the enemy, feeling utterly convinced that none could stand against him. There remained nothing but for Richard to shut himself within his strongest castle and seek to make what terms he could with the enraged lord whose vengeance he had brought upon himself.

To the castle where Richard had taken refuge came the proud army of Bolingbroke, who demanded a parley with the king. Richard, accompanied by the lords that still remained faithful to him showed himself upon the walls to answer Bolingbroke; and although the sun of his past fortune was now set, and he could hope for little from the foes who thus defied him, Richard gazed on them with haughty majesty of bearing and conducted himself still as though he were more powerful than his enemies. He said that he was amazed to see his subjects in such show of arms against him, asking how they dared so to forget themselves as not to kneel before him where they stood. From the Earl of Northumberland Richard demanded that he show the hand that had dismissed him from his kingship, and he bade Northumberland to tell to Bolingbroke who stood nearby, that every step he took on English ground was dangerous treason. For Richard said that he had been crowned by God to rule the land of England as his fathers had ruled before him, and although he was now bereft of friends, pestilence and sorrow should fall upon the subjects who should dare to lift their hands against his throne.

Bolingbroke, however, while he secretly desired to win the crown and intended nothing less than to depose King Richard and place himself in royal power, was not prepared as yet to disclose to his followers the full extent of his purpose. He replied to the king that he had come but to take back again his own possessions and to seek repeal of the sentence of banishment that had been passed upon him. If this request were granted he would soon disperse his army. And he sent to Richard as a messenger the Earl of Northumberland to assure the king of his good will and generous intentions toward him.

But the king had no sooner consented to Bolingbroke's terms than Bolingbroke made further demands upon him, for he requested that Richard descend from off the walls and parley with him in the castle court; and at this King Richard perceived that his cousin, while pretending homage and fair treatment, was secretly determined to work his ruin; and Richard lost completely his assurance of mind and the royalty of his bearing, crying out, " What must the king do now to please his cousin? Must he submit? He is content to do so. Must he lose the name of king? In God's name let it go! " He said that he would give away his jewels for a set of beads and his scepter for a palmer's staff; his subjects he would exchange for a pair of carved saints that he might pray to, and in return for all his kingdom he desired only an obscure grave. Or, better still, said Richard, let him be buried in the king's highway, where subjects' feet hourly might trample on his head as they had trod upon his heart while yet he was alive. And Richard gave himself into the power of his cousin, who proceeded then to march toward London, bearing the king a prisoner into the city.

No sooner did Bolingbroke attain power over Richard, than he commenced with all his noblemen to compel the captive king to resign the crown and to do it as though of his own choice and free will, for thus, thought Bolingbroke, his new title would be strengthened against wars to take from him what he had won. And Richard, whose spirit had become weakened in his captivity, soon consented to this hard-hearted measure and prepared to give away in public all his high authority, his crown and his robes of office to Bolingbroke.

In the presence of the nobles and many witnesses, the unfortunate Richard was summoned from his place of imprisonment, and he came with such show of grief that even his enemies were moved to pity as they looked upon him. And he asked why he was sent for to a king, and cried, " God save the king! " asking if no man present would say amen. Again he demanded for what service he had been summoned, and the Duke of York then told him he must publicly make offer of his state and crown to Bolingbroke.

Richard then lifted the crown and gave it to his cousin, bidding him seize upon it; and when Bolingbroke asked if he were not willing to resign, and that he thought it had been done of his own free will, Richard answered that he gave away his crown but that his griefs were still his own. None the less, said Richard, he washed away his balm with his own tears and plucked away his crown with his own hand; and he cried, "God save King Henry and send him many years of sunshine days," asking what more remained that he must do.

The Earl of Northumberland replied that Richard must read a list of the grievous crimes that he had committed against his country, so that all men might think that he was worthily deposed.

"Must I do this?" said Richard. "Gentle Northumberland, if your offenses were on record would it not shame you in such a company to read them?" And when Northumberland gave him the written paper, Richard said that his eyes were too full of tears to gaze upon it, and yet, he said, salt water had not blinded them so much but that he saw a group of traitors that surrounded him. But turning his eyes upon himself, he saw, he said, that he, too, was a traitor with the rest, for giving consent to make his glory base, and from his state of king to become a slave. He called for a mirror, saying he would look therein and see how he appeared since he had lost his majesty; and beholding his face the same, where sorrow as yet had struck no visible marks of grief, he dashed the mirror from his hand and shattered it. And Richard then was taken to the castle of Pomfret where Bolingbroke commanded that he should be kept in close confinement.

On his way to prison Richard met his queen and took a sorrowful leave of her, for Bolingbroke had ordered her into banishment, bidding her return to France whence she had come as Richard's bride. And after Bolingbroke was crowned, Richard was shut up within a dungeon where he beheld no man except the jailer who would bring him daily food, who seemed, as Richard said, to offer it only to prolong the misery that he wished were at an end. And the poor, forsaken Richard tried to reconcile his mind to his captivity, passing the time by thinking that he still was king of England, or again that he had been unkinged by Bolingbroke and how the people had thrown dust and refuse on his head when he was brought a prisoner to London. And the thoughts of Richard were desperate and melancholy, until it seemed that he must soon forgo his reason and become mad.

In all his former kingdom there was one man, however, who still remained loyal to Richard and desired even then to serve him. This was a poor groom who formerly had been employed in the royal stables. And this groom prevailed upon the gaolers of King Richard that he be allowed to look again upon the face of his former master; and forgetting in his joy the changed state that had befallen Richard, he called him "royal prince" with all signs of true loyalty and affection, telling him that he had laboured hard to see him, and how his heart had ached when he beheld Bolingbroke in the coronation riding on Richard's own horse, Barbary, who bore him proudly, seeming to disdain the ground. And Richard cried out in grief on hearing this, for Barbary had been his favourite steed and often had been fed from his own hand.

Bolingbroke, although he was crowned king, feared lest Richard might regain his liberty and stir up war against him. And once he exclaimed in anger, asking if he had no friends who would rid him of the living fear of Richard's presence. While Bolingbroke refused to order Richard's death, he secretly desired it, and his wish was known to his followers, one of whom believed that if he should slay Richard, Bolingbroke would give him rich reward for freeing him of a tormenting terror.

This knight, who was called Sir Pierce of Exton, came to Pomfret shortly after the groom had departed from Richard's presence; and he burst into the cell with armed servants who set on Richard with their weapons, seeking to strike him down. And although Richard bravely endeavoured to defend himself, he was soon wounded mortally, overborne by the strength and numbers of those that beset him. And he died nobly as a king, while those that slew him, marking how courageously he met his end, were stricken with a sudden shame and sorrow. And they brought his body to Bolingbroke, who showed a sincere grief on seeing it.

Thus this unfortunate king whose fate, although brought upon him by himself, seemed far more terrible than he deserved, lost both his country and his life; and Henry the Fourth ruled over England in his stead.

THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH

PRINCE HAL, the eldest son of Henry the Fourth and due successor to the crown of England, caused his father many doubts and anxieties; for the young prince thought little of preparing himself for his high office, but haunted the taverns of Eastcheap, surrounded himself with dissolute supporters and, to all appearance, cared for no other pastime than drinking, dicing and brawling with his wild companions.

The looseness and seeming indifference on the part of the young prince was rendered even darker by the brilliance of a youth of his own age named Harry Percy, son to the Earl of Northumberland, but more widely known as Hotspur — for Percy bore himself in battle with such fury that this nickname had been given him, and was, withal, so skillful and brave a soldier that he commanded many noblemen far older than himself. The king with a sigh often wished that his son were the Percy and Hotspur the Plantagenet, for while Percy distinguished himself as any prince, the king beheld riot and dishonour stain the brow of his young Harry, who, he feared, would work the ruin of his subjects.

But the same high spirit that won for Hotspur his fame on the battle-field caused him to be impatient of submission, unwilling to render to the king a proper deference; and when his sovereign demanded of him certain prisoners, Hotspur refused to give them up, asking for their ransom the recall of his banished relative, Mortimer: so that the king in no uncertain terms warned Hotspur never again to speak of a rebel who had incurred the royal displeasure and bade him on pain of severe punishment to deliver up his prisoners at once and with no further words.

Hotspur, angered at this tyranny, for so he called it, rose in rebellion against the king, and with him rose his father, the Earl of

Northumberland and many powerful noblemen joined them, chief of whom were the Archbishop of York and the Earl of Worcester. As they had placed Henry upon the throne by force of arms against King Richard, they plotted to drive him from it with an equal violence, and to crown as king no other than Mortimer himself.

At this very time the young prince was engaged in his usual pursuits and had devised a marvelous jest on his monstrous friend and follower, Sir John Falstaff — the dishonest knight who ruled in taverns, loved a capon only less than he loved sack and best of all delighted to go a thieving; for, closely as Sir John hugged his quart pot and his roast, he called himself one of Diana's foresters,— a highwayman, a minion of the moon. Well from the rear would he cheer on his retainers, roaring out commands in an awful voice to the terror of honest men!

This fat rascal had besought Prince Hal to go with him on one of these same sallies, a robbing expedition to Gadshill; and the prince, with his friend Poins, determined to accompany Falstaff thither, but for a purpose far different from what the rogue imagined. Disguised in suits of buckram, the prince and Poins proposed to fall upon the thieves themselves and take their booty from them, the virtue of which, Poins said, would be the uncomprehensible lies that Falstaff would tell them at supper: — how thirty at least he fought with; what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured, and in reproving him would lie the jest.

So, while the king, in great disturbance, had sent in search of his wild son, that youth, with Poins, Falstaff and his retainers, had issued from their tavern and prepared to waylay the king's subjects; and the prince and Poins for their own secret purpose had deserted the rest of the company. When the travellers were set upon and their purses taken from them, these two in disguise leaped forth upon the thieves, who took to their heels in fear for their lives, Falstaff roaring and begging for mercy as he fled.

Poins and the prince then bore to the tavern the money they had taken and awaited there the return of the faint-hearted robbers, who with swords in their hands and pistols at their sides had suffered two men to outface them from their prize; and these rascals soon made their entrance, Falstaff calling for sack and invoking a plague on all cowards, for he believed that the prince and Poins had run away even before himself.

Falstaff said that he could beat such a prince out of his kingdom with a dagger of lath and drive his subjects before him like a flock of wild geese; that his party had been set on by an hundred men; who had torn their booty from them; that for two hours he had been at half swords with a dozen of them together and escaped by a miracle, being eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; his buckler cut through and through, his sword hacked like a handsaw. He told a monstrous tale of two men in buckram suits whom he had encountered, and these two soon grew to be four, then seven, then nine, and then eleven,— seven of whom Falstaff swore that he had slain with his own hand.

The prince cried out that these lies were as monstrous as their father that begot them, gross as a mountain; and he and Poins disclosed themselves and confounded Falstaff. But the rogue said then that he had known them all the while and had refused to raise his sword against the person of his own future liege and sovereign; though he were as valiant as Hercules, he said, he would not harm the heir apparent; and he called them gallant lads and hearts of gold and prepared to make merry with them until morning.

It was at this time that the king's messenger summoned Prince Hal to court, where he was at once called to private audience with his father, who spoke to him of the foes who had risen in rebellion and even then were threatening the crown. In sorrowful words he blamed the prince for his past wildness and ill behaviour, saying that he knew not but that God had bred revengement out of his own blood for some past sin he had committed, otherwise, said he, such barren pleasures and rude society could not accompany the greatness of his blood and hold their level in a princely heart.

"Let me wonder, Harry, at your affections," said his father,

" which do hold a wing quite from the flight of all your ancestors. Your place at council you have rudely lost. You are become almost an alien to the hearts of all the court and princes of your blood."

He said the hope and expectation of Prince Harry's time were ruined, and the soul of every man prophetically did forethink his fall. In even deeper sorrow he compared his son with the weak king, Richard, who likewise grew companion to the common streets, until the sun-like presence of his majesty was dimmed and no man regarded him; and Hotspur he likened to himself that conquered Richard, saying that even as he had been then, so was Percy at that very hour. " Yet wherefore do I tell you this?" he ended. " You, Harry, who are like enough to fight against me under Percy's pay, to show how much you are degenerate."

When the prince heard his father speak in this manner, he knew that slanderers had borne ill tales against him, for while he had been irregular and wild, these were the limits of his vices, and, indeed, he had privately resolved to overcome them and put on a better front before the world.

So Harry cried out to the king never to say or believe such things against him, exclaiming, " God forgive them that so much have swayed your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!" He vowed that all this he would redeem on Percy's head and call him to so strict account that he should render every glory up. He said he wished his shames were doubled and every honour crowning the Percy's helm were multitudes, for he should make this northern youth exchange the glorious deeds for the indignities; and he swore that, God willing, he should perform what he had promised, and would die a hundred thousand deaths ere he should break the smallest parcel of his vow.

" In this," cried the king, " a hundred thousand rebels die," and he rejoiced in the change that had befallen his dear son, who he said should now have charge and sovereign trust. He commanded Harry to set forward in a few days' time with the troops that had been given him, and to await his own royal presence and the coming of other forces at a place called Bridgenorth, there to make headway against the rebels.

In the meanwhile, Hotspur and certain of his confederates, the Earl of Worcester and the great Scot, Douglas, were sorely disturbed at an illness that had befallen the Earl of Northumberland, who informed them that he would be delayed in joining their forces. They feared that in the lack of this jointure, wanting as they did the troops the earl would bring them, they might not stand against the soldiers of the king.

They heard at the same time that the king and the Prince of Wales were marching against them; and Hotspur on hearing this forgot his disturbance in his usual ardour for battle. He cried out that they came like sacrifices in their trim, and should all be offered hot and bleeding to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war. He could not bear, he said, to hear they were so nigh and yet unconquered; he was impatient for his horse which was to bear him like a thunderbolt against the bosom of the Prince of Wales, for Harry to Harry should meet and never part till one were slain.

There was other news for the rebels, and of more evil tenor than any that as yet had come to them, for they learned by the same messenger that the Welsh soldiers under Glendower could not be drawn together under fourteen days; and Hotspur knew that this reverse was a deathblow to his cause, for now could he never hope to defeat the king; but he resolved, nevertheless, to offer battle with all the strength he was able, and the ill wind that blew upon his fortune rendered him only keener to slay the Prince of Wales, whom he hated with a double hatred, for being heir apparent and son to Henry.

The king, however, held Hotspur and other of his opponents in so high regard that he determined not to attack them without a final effort to come at peace with no bloodshed; so he sent to the rebels as messenger, Sir Walter Blunt, one of his most trusted noblemen, who came before Hotspur saying he bore gracious offers from his Majesty.

Hotspur replied that Henry well knew when to promise, when to pay. The king, said he, had disgraced him in his victories, rated his uncle from the council board and in rage dismissed his father from the court, breaking oath on oath, committing wrong on wrong until he had driven them to seek out this head of safety. When Sir Walter Blunt asked if he should return with this answer, Hotspur bade him tell the king he would withdraw awhile and in the morning send the Earl of Worcester with his purposes; for Hotspur had been persuaded by his confederates to delay battle in hope of reinforcement and was likewise somewhat moved by the good words of the king's messenger.

In the morning, therefore, the Earl of Worcester went to King Henry and learned from him his generous intentions, which were that if the rebels would accept his grace, he would welcome them again as friends and followers and freely forgive their outrage, but if they were obdurate and persisted in defying him, rebuke and dread correction should do their offices upon them.

In the parley Prince Hal besought the king that if there must be battle to let the issue rest between himself and Harry Percy, and through Worcester he sent Hotspur a challenge to single combat, saying that while he had been a truant to chivalry and heard that Hotspur did so account him, he was content to save bloodshed on either side by trying fortune with him in single fight; and he spoke of Hotspur in so generous a manner, with such modest and manly courtesy, that Worcester withdrew greatly impressed, wondering at the change in one whom he had considered no better than a tavern brawler.

Worcester, however, distrusted the king to such extent that he dared not acquaint Hotspur with the generous terms that had been offered — for he feared his nephew would accede to them, and in all probability Hotspur would have done so; but Worcester informed him that the king had called them rebels and traitors and would bid them battle presently; and the two armies then came together in unequal but bitter conflict.

While the battle was in progress, Hotspur came upon the prince, and recognizing each other at an instant, the two prepared for mortal combat; and the prince said that Percy must no longer think to share with him in glory, for two stars could not keep their motion in one sphere, nor England brook the double reign of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.

" Nor shall it," replied Hotspur, " for the hour is come to end the one of us." With these words they closed upon each other, until the prince struck Hotspur to the ground, mortally wounded, who barely had time to grieve the loss of his proud name at arms, which lay heavier at his heart than loss of life itself, when death silenced his lips forever, and the prince in sorrow covered up his face, saying that the earth that bore him dead, bore not alive so stout a gentleman.

When the noble Percy was slain, it was quickly seen that the heart of his cause was broken, for his soldiers could make no headway without him; and the rebels soon were routed, leaving the king to turn against the other forces that threatened him.

The Earl of Worcester, who was taken captive, was condemned to death, for Henry had learned of the false message he delivered to the noble Hotspur. Henry bade Prince John proceed against Northumberland and the Archbishop, while he with the Prince of Wales should overcome Glendower; for, said Henry, with such another check rebellion would lose all sway, and leave to him his own again.

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH

WHEN the battle of Shrewsbury was ended, Hotspur slain and his forces put to flight, Rumour with many tongues invaded all the countryside and scattered false reports like rain among the villages, where it was told that young Prince Hal no longer lived and that the king himself had bowed his anointed head as low as death before the wrath of the great Douglas.

With strange swiftness these false tidings were borne to the castle of Northumberland, where the old, sick earl awaited word of the battle and the fate of his son, Hotspur. A lord named Bardolph came before the earl with gracious news — as good as heart could wish, he said — for it was certain that the prince was slain by Hotspur, that the royal troops were routed and that fortune everywhere appeared to shine upon the swords of the insurgents. When the earl asked if Lord Bardolph had seen the field himself and if he came from Shrewsbury, Bardolph replied, no; but that a gentleman who witnessed the battle had told him all this news and vouched it to be true.

Even while Lord Bardolph spoke, a harsher message came, casting a cloud of doubt upon his words; for one of Northumberland's retainers heard that everywhere rebellion had ill luck and that young Harry Percy's spur was cold in death. And the earl knew not what to think or whom to believe, and his doubt and fear were terrible to behold.

Soon there came to his castle a gentleman named Morton, pale and trembling as though in illness, and the earl cried that Morton's face was like the title-leaf of a most tragic volume; in the whiteness of his cheeks he knew that all was lost: for even did such a man, he said, so faint, so spiritless, draw Priam's curtain in the dead of night to tell him Troy was burnt. As Priam found the fire ere the messenger his tongue, just so, said Northumberland, did he know of his son's death before it was spoken, for Morton's brow was terrible with dark events and Hotspur's fate was plainly written on it. But the earl, although he guessed what was as yet unsaid, shuddered to believe and asked with trembling hope if his divination lied. He implored Morton to tell him that his fears were false, saying that they should be a sweet disgrace in the most happy tidings he desired to hear; but when Morton still looked sadly on him and hesitated in his speech the earl cried out for him to speak the worst that had befallen and speak it swiftly, for the tongue that bore ill news could not be blamed, and yet must sound forever after as a funeral bell that tolled for a departed friend.

Morton said that the earl's spirit was most true, his fears most certain; to the question if he came from the place of battle he answered that he ran away from thence, where hateful death put on his ugliest mask to fright his party. He had seen with his own eyes the prince strike Hotspur to the earth, and Hotspur nevermore sprang up alive. His death, continued Morton, took all fire and heat from the best tempered courage of his troops, so that arrows flew not swifter to their aim than did the rebel soldiers, aiming at safety, fly from the field on hearing of their leader's fate. In short, the king had won the day, and had despatched a speedy force of soldiers against Northumberland himself.

"There is physic in your news," replied Northumberland, "and in some measure it had made me well, for my limbs, weakened with grief, are now made strong with grief; and, as a wretch in fever who breaks from his keepers' arms, I cast aside my crutch to grasp a sword, and glove the hand that holds it with a scaly gauntlet, jointed with steel." The old man bade them bind his brows with iron, for lighter coverings would be too wanton for a head that princes aimed at, and he called forth all the evil hours that must come, to frown upon him now with all their spite, when he cared not what became of him. And the false strength of the earl changed suddenly into a violent outburst of grief for his lost son, so terrible that all about him feared for his reason; and his grief when it subsided was succeeded by weakness, until he could no longer be relied on by his companions who were struggling to make a final stand against the king. They prepared at once to meet Prince John who had been sent against them, strengthening themselves until they might proceed without the power of Northumberland, for the lack of this, they said, had been the cause of their defeat at Shrewsbury.

It was well for the rebels that they did so, for Northumberland's wife and the Lady Percy, Hotspur's widow, persuaded the earl in his weakened state to withdraw before he, too, should lose his life. They reminded him that his own son had died in the lack of his support and begged him to be no dearer of his honour now than hitherto. Honour, said Lady Percy, lay dead in the grave of her heart's dear Harry, whom the earl had left to defend a field where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name did seem defensible. She so worked upon the fears of the old earl that he deserted his confederates, sending word to them that while he prayed heartily for their good success and wished his person with them, he could not bring such powers as would do credit to his rank; hence, he said, he purposed to retire to Scotland and to ripen his fortunes there until he should be in a better state to aid them in their struggle.

The Archbishop of York and his allies justly believed that Northumberland feared the result of their encounter with Prince John, and they were forced to give up hope in him who should have been the strongest power of their enterprise, whose wrongs were deeper than their own and sealed by a son's blood; and as they had already planned they now prepared to make headway by themselves, marching against the prince with an army of twenty-five thousand men that they had gathered.

In the meanwhile Prince John was adding to his army every day; and an order was sent to Sir John Falstaff to join him with a company of soldiers; for Falstaff, who had fought in his own fashion at the battle of Shrewsbury, pretended to have performed most valiant deeds there, bragging of his bravery until he had acquired the name of a great warrior in all the taverns of Eastcheap. And Falstaff set forth to join the prince, taking with him his favourite rascal, Bardolph, a rogue whose face flamed like a firebrand from drinking; and Bardolph was to recruit soldiers with Falstaff in the towns that they passed through, until they had impressed a sufficient number, as they had been commanded, to swell the ranks of John against the rebels.

Falstaff travelled by most easy stages to the wars, stopping long in Gloucestershire to recruit his soldiers, where he tarried pleasantly at the house of one Justice Shallow who was known to him, and with whom he emptied countless bumpers of sack while his soldiers lacked their commander. For Falstaff said that he had taken but two shirts with him to the wars and did not intend to sweat extraordinarily either on his way thither or in battle when he arrived. If the armies came together on a hot day he swore by all that was holy he would brandish nothing but a bottle; and for all his long stay in Gloucestershire, he impressed there no more than three ragged, forlorn knaves — the rest having succeeded in bribing him to pass them by.

Prince John and Lord Westmoreland, in the meanwhile, had conceived a plan of treachery to overcome their enemies with a show of peace and apparent fairness. They sent to the Archbishop of York, who was the leader of the rebels, a flag of truce requesting a parley, and the Archbishop with his several lords met the prince at an equal distance between the two armies.

The prince spoke to them with apparent friendliness and with great seeming desire to effect peace with no further bloodshed. When the rebel leaders gave to him a list of all their grievances, he admitted that these were just and promised that he would redress them all. And when the rebels in great joy said that now a battle was no longer necessary, John bade them go and disperse their army as he would likewise do; then they should drink together and embrace as friends that had been reconciled.

It was to be observed, however, that while the rebel soldiers hastened away with shouts of rejoicing, the prince's army remained standing in battle order; and no sooner were the rebels scattered, than John bade his captains strike up their drums and pursue them, commanding also that the Archbishop and all his lords be brought to instant execution. For, said John, while he would keep his promise with most Christian care, it contained no word of safety either to the Archbishop or any of the rebel leaders, who must all look to the headsman for their punishment as traitors to the king. In this way at a single blow the country came again beneath the rule of Henry, and the rising to place Mortimer upon the throne of England was suppressed forever.

King Henry, however, had met with harder fortune in Wales, where the enemy retired into the impassable mountains of their country, leaving the royal army to contend with sickness and famine. And no sooner did the king return to his own court, than a grievous illness came upon him.

While the king lay ill, news of Prince John's success was brought to him, and in his weakness word of this good fortune was more than he could bear; and while he had been reviving to all appearance, now a sudden change came over him, and it was plain to see that he lay dying.

In King Henry's last hours, an unfortunate happening made him believe that his son Harry, who had distinguished himself so bravely on the field of battle, had returned to his former evil conduct; for while the royal crown lay on the pillow of the dying king, he closed his eyes in a still slumber, and Prince Harry, who was alone with him at the time, believed this sleep to be his father's death. Looking on the crown that was, he said, a golden care, the root of his father's illness and the disturber of his peace, the prince removed it from the pillow where it lay, and placed it on his brows, as though to contend with it. For, he said, while his due to his father was tears and heavy sorrows of the blood, his father's due to him was that same imperial crown, which he should henceforth guard with a most reverent care, and in deep sorrow he quitted the room, taking the crown with him.

But the king was not yet dead as the prince believed, and he now awoke and called his lords about him, missing his crown; and he demanded who had taken it away. His lords replied that they knew not, but that Prince Harry had recently been with him, and the king believed that Harry had taken the crown with unseemly haste from a sense of undue vanity, begrudging his own father half an hour more of life. He summoned the prince before him and dismissed the others; and he administered to the prince a deep rebuke, pitiful to hear in his great weakness. For he bade the prince begone and dig his father's grave himself, and bid the merry bells ring to his ear that he was crowned, not that his father died. Forgetting the changed habits of his son and his great deeds at Shrewsbury, the king cried out for his poor country, for when the fifth Harry should come to power, apes of idleness, he said, should flock to court from every region, driving his wise counsellors away, breaking his wise decrees, plucking the muzzle of restraint from the curbed license of his time, until all England should again become a wilderness, peopled with its old inhabitants, the wolves. And he bade the prince to tarry but a little, for his cloud of dignity would quickly drop; and in a few hours more, the prince would own by right the crown that he had stolen.

At this the prince with tears begged his father to desist and told him in what spirit he had taken the crown from his pillow. He said that if it infected his blood with joy, or if he welcomed it with any spirit of vanity, he wished that it might be kept from him forever, and that he should become as the poorest vassal that knelt in awe and terror before it. With loving words the prince once more convinced his father of his repentance and sincerity of purpose, until the king rejoiced again and said that God had put it in Prince Harry's heart to take the crown, to plead so wisely in excuse of it.

With his last breath the king gave his son counsel how to conduct his realm and meet the enemies that surrounded him, who must be engrossed with foreign wars to keep them from plotting further mischief in their own country; and the king died in the assured belief that his son would carry on his own wise measures and become a just and mighty ruler of whom England could be proud.

When King Henry the Fourth lay dead and Prince Harry had assumed the royal powers, there was doubt and foreboding among his brothers and the gentlemen of his court as to how he would conduct himself; and Harry beheld many look askance upon him and regard him with a certain fear. First of those that feared him was the Lord Chief Justice of England, who had caused him once to be arrested and thrown into prison for breaking some decree enacted by his father. But Harry bade the justice to continue to wield his power with the same bold and impartial spirit that he had formerly shown against himself; and he bade his brothers likewise to fear no longer, for his former faults, he said, were buried in the grave of his dead father. Instead of summoning to court his old tavern associates and low companions, as many had feared that he would do, King Henry surrounded himself with grave and wise counsellors, preparing with all his heart to enter in the cares and duties of his kingdom.

Sir John Falstaff, however, who had returned from the wars (where he had arrived too late to be of any assistance) had no idea of the change that had befallen his companion, the former prince, who now was king. He believed the death of King Henry to be an earnest of reward and great distinction for himself now that Harry had attained his royal power. No sooner, therefore, did Falstaff hear the welcome news of Henry's death, than he hastened rejoicing to bear his great bulk to London, inviting with him all his old friends and associates, to whom he promised offices unheard of, honour and vast wealth, for now, said Falstaff, he should be the king's nearest and dearest adviser, great in the estimation of all that regarded him. And Falstaff placed himself where he could greet the new king after his coronation, intending to call out to him from the streets as he went by.

"Stand here by me," said Falstaff to the rogues that accompanied him, "I will compel the king to do you grace and honour. I will leer on him as he comes by, and do but mark the countenance that he will give me."

And when the new king was returning from his coronation surrounded by grave noblemen, soldiers and attendants, Falstaff called out to him loudly, nicknaming him Hal, his own royal Hal, his sweet boy and his Jove; and when the chief justice approached him demanding silence, asking if he were mad to address his sovereign in such a manner, Falstaff continued to address the king, calling out to know if Henry were not glad to see him, and invoking blessings upon him.

Then King Henry said to Falstaff that he knew him not, although in earlier days he often had dreamed of such a man, so monstrous, so old and so profane. Being awake, he said, he did despise his dream; and he told Falstaff never to presume to think that he was now his former self. And he bade Falstaff think upon his sins for that the grave yawned thrice as wide for him as for other men, commanding him to leave gormandizing, to make less his body and increase his grace. He banished Falstaff on pain of death not to come near his royal person by ten mile; but he gave his old companion a liberal sum of money for his support, so that lack of means might not enforce him to do evil. And thus King Henry publicly renounced his former ways and companions, preparing to become a great and successful ruler over England.

THE LIFE OF KING HENRY THE FIFTH

WHEN King Henry the Fourth lay dying, he bade his son to occupy the English noblemen with foreign wars and in this way to restrain them from plotting against the crown in further rebellion; the young king bore in mind his father's words and bethought him of his mighty ancestor, King Edward the Third, who was descended from the royalty of France and invaded France for the chief purpose of enforcing his demand upon the throne. Henry likewise cast his eye over the fair and fertile provinces of France, considering how with justice he could gain dominion there; he remembered the great victories of Edward, and in Edward's name made claim to certain French dukedoms and even thought to take the crown of France itself.

Henry was encouraged to seek this crown by the priests and noblemen of England, who told him that his claim to it was right and just. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that there was no bar to Henry's accession except the law of Salique land which read that only those of male descent should inherit royal powers. King Henry's right, said the Archbishop, came from the line of women and by the Salic law was void of justice. But Salique land, continued he, lay not in France but in Germany, between the rivers Sala and Elbe, which made it plain that the law had been devised for a people other than the French, and furthermore, the French had often disregarded it in choosing their own rulers. The Archbishop, therefore, bade his dread lord, as he called King Henry, to unwind his bloody flag in the thoughts of his great ancestors,— of the Black Prince, who foraged in the blood of French nobility, and of the great King Edward who stood on a hill nearby and smiled to behold his lion's whelp defeat the whole proud power of France without his father's aid. Other priests and noblemen likewise besought King Henry to awaken remembrance of those valiant dead, whose blood and courage ran in his own veins; and the king replied to them at last that he would rule in France and be its lord or lay his bones in an unworthy urn, for History, he said, either should speak freely of his deeds or pass him by in silence. Henry then discussed with his counsellors the best defenses for his country in his absence, lest the furious Scots should pour over the unguarded borderland to ravage England as they had attempted in the reign of the great Edward, — for Henry was determined now to marshal an invading army and set sail to conquer France.

The resolution of King Henry to make war on France was quickened by an act of the French prince who was called the Dauphin, who believed that the English king retained the follies of his early youth; that he was still surrounded with dissolute companions, such as Falstaff; and that he was not to be feared or even treated with due courtesy. For the Dauphin returned word to Henry's claim, that Henry savoured far too greatly of his youth to demand dukedoms or provinces — which were not easily to be won in France, he said; and he sent to Henry (as more fitting for his light and idle spirit than the dukedoms he required) a present of tennis-balls — a bitter mock at Henry that a prince more thoughtful than the Dauphin would have forborne. For Henry replied in a terrible manner to the ambassadors that conveyed this insult, bidding them return and tell their master that when the English rackets were matched to those balls of France a set of tennis should be played that would, ere ended, strike the Dauphin's crown into the hazard: for the tennis-balls, said Henry, should be turned to gun-stones and the Dauphin's soul should be sore charged for the wasteful vengeance that should fly with them. The Dauphin's mock, continued Henry, should savour of but shallow wit when thousands more should weep than ever laughed with him that made it, for his merry message should mock many a thousand widows out of their dear husbands; mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down. And Henry bade his noblemen to hasten his expedition with all speed, for now there lay no thought in him save thoughts of France, and he was eager now to bring the Dauphin to a speedy answer of his insolence.

Through England, then, there ran the hum and stir of busy preparation. At a thousand forges, armourers laboured night and day to equip the troops that must set forward; ships were built and fitted with sails and rigging; and a great fleet soon awaited Henry and his forces at Southampton, while from all parts of the country men and boys flocked thither to enlist under his banner.

But the rebellion that Henry feared among the turbulent noblemen that surrounded him was even then arising, and the French had been able to bribe three English lords to slay the king before he should set foot on shipboard. These noblemen were doubly dangerous because King Henry numbered them among his dearest supporters — one of them in particular knew all Henry's plans and all his counsels, and had ever been in close and personal attendance on him.

Henry, however, was aware of all the purposes of these false lords. While he allowed them to attend him as usual, to fawn on him and flatter him, and while he feigned to believe in every word they spoke, he intended to make a fitting example of them at the time of his embarkment. So, when the day approached that Henry must set sail, he called the three conspirators before him and gave them what they thought to be their French commissions, but what really were their death warrants; and he bade them all three to read, remarking that he knew their worthiness. When they did so, and beheld their plot to be as palpable as day, they begged for mercy from the king; but strangely enough, they had but lately counselled him to put to death a poor wretch who had railed against his person when in drink. So Henry told them that for very shame they must not dare to talk of mercy, which their own advice suppressed and killed within him. He bade his other noblemen to look upon the inhuman monsters who for a few light crowns would give their sovereign to death and their country to desolation. And he called that lord who knew his secrets and who had even been his bedfellow, so close was their former friendship, a cruel, savage and inhuman beast, wondering that foreign hire could extract from him one spark of evil to annoy his little finger. For treason and murder, said Henry, ever kept company together like two yoke-devils, but this lord had now brought in amazement by his act to wait upon the two; and his revolt was like a second fall of man, leaving a blot to mark all true and honourable souls with some suspicion.

Henry believed that the discovery of so fearful a plot at such a time was a good omen for the success of his expedition into France. His fleet set sail and soon arrived before the town of Harfleur, which Henry prepared to lay siege to, while he sent to the French king, ambassadors, who were to acquaint him with the English purposes and bid him resign his crown before his country should be wasted in bloody war.

When Henry sailed for France, a sad fate befell his former companion, Sir John Falstaff, who was grieved to the heart that he could not accompany the king, and who chafed under the banishment from the royal presence that Henry had laid upon him. Falstaff fell ill of a burning fever and took to his bed in strange disorder of mind. And there he died, and the hostess of the tavern who was with him at his end, said she knew there could be only one outcome when she beheld Sir John so changed from his former self: for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and he babbled of green fields. " How now, Sir John," the hostess had said to him, " what, man, be of good cheer! " But with that, he had cried out the name of God three or four times; and when the hostess, to comfort him, bade him to think not thus dismally — there was no need, she hoped, for him to trouble himself with thoughts of God as yet — he desired her to lay more clothes at his feet which were as cold as any stone; and then he died, the hostess said, like any innocent child, just between twelve and one at the turning of the tide; making a finer end than he had lived, and going to his death in peace, like any Christian.

The French, in the meanwhile, were made aware of Henry's coming, and their king, whose name was Louis, bade his knights to prepare with all speed to meet the English. Henry, the French king said, was strong and came of that bloody strain that had so shamed the French at Creçy, where the black name of Edward the Black Prince had worked havoc among their proudest noblemen. Louis ordered his son, the Dauphin, and many others, to strengthen his towns of war, to call together soldiers and prepare in every way for the bitter struggle that shortly would be on foot; and Louis blamed the Dauphin for saying that the English were idly kinged, when Henry's warlike preparations spoke so clearly to the contrary.

Even at that moment, the ambassadors from Henry came into Louis' presence, demanding the crown and calling all the terrors of the coming war upon the head of the French king should he refuse. To the Dauphin, Henry sent scorn and contempt, saying that he was now come to force requital from him, and that unless the king, his father, should sweeten his bitter mock by full consent to his demands, he would call the Dauphin to so hot answer that the caves of France should all complain of his former jest in echo of the English cannon.

The English then invested the town of Harfleur with a swift and bloody siege until the citizens were compelled to parley with them; and Henry bade them unbar their gates or he would leave their town in ashes and allow his men to range with conscience wide as hell among them, putting to the sword their infants and old men, and laying rude enforcing hands upon their wives and fresh-fair virgins. And when the town surrendered, which it did promptly, Henry left a portion of his force as garrison, and marched with the rest toward Calais, where he purposed to go into winter quarters.

The English at this time were in sore distress, for sickness had made havoc in their ranks and what with their weakened numbers and the men that had been left behind in Harfleur, the French possessed five soldiers for every one of them. They were, moreover, starved and worn out with toil, appearing gaunt and famished like an army of spectres — heart-sick and utterly dispirited. And in this plight they came upon the whole French army that was embattled against them near a castle called Agincourt.

The French observed the weak condition of their enemies, and sent to Henry a herald, insolently demanding that he consider his ransom or prepare to die with all his followers; but Henry bade the herald return and say that the English although lessened in numbers and weakened by starvation and disease would not avoid a battle; and if the French opposed their line of march, they would come on though France and such another neighbour stood in their way.

Henry then drew his forces forward until they were not fifteen hundred paces from the French lines. And when night fell, his men could hear the voices of their foes and see their figures, dark in the firelight; while the hammers of the armourers closing up rivets, the neighing of horses and the thousand sounds of dreadful preparation for battle could be heard in either camp.

That night in the French tents there was drinking and merriment, and the French lords even played at dice for the prisoners they intended to take upon the morrow; but the English, who seemed like so many ghosts, spent their night in prayer and watchfulness. No sound came from their camp save sounds of martial preparation, and King Henry walked from tent to tent with cheerful demeanour and brave words, putting heart into his followers and giving no sign by word or look, that he realized his great danger. To a nobleman who wished that all the valiant gentlemen who were left in England could be with the king in his hour of need, Henry replied that he would have no other men than those that were with him. If they were to die, they were sufficient for England to lose, and if to live, so much the more honour for each one of them. Rather, said Henry, let it be proclaimed throughout his army that any man who feared the battle should be given free leave to depart and money for his passage home be put into his purse, for, Henry said, he would not die in that man's company.

In the morning King Henry saw to it that the English were the first to draw up their forces in battle order, and the French upon awakening beheld their enemies prepared to meet them — a strange array, for the English were so lean and worn that they appeared like shadows, their clothes in rags, their armour darkened with rust; and they were mounted on dull eyed steeds with drooping heads and gum down-dropping from their lips, scarce strong enough to bear their riders' weight, while ravens flew above the sorry host and almost perched upon their standards. And the French gave way to merriment at the appearance of their foes, believing that in the weakened veins of the English, blood ran so thin as scarce to give each naked curtle-axe a stain, and that the French soldiers would be forced to sheathe their swords for lack of sport, while the battle, if battle it could be called, might just as well be left to their lackeys and to the peasants that swarmed about their ranks.

The despised English, however, were destined completely to overthrow their enemies in that battle, for the French came on them in great numbers, but with such assurance that they planned no order; and the very numbers of the French enabled the English to throw them into confusion, driving them to fly in a headlong mass where they were easily slain by thousands. The success of the English seemed little short of miraculous, and the proudest noblemen of France fell down in death before their swords or died beneath the arrows of the English archers, who fought that day bare-breasted and bare-armed, the better to draw their bows against their enemies. At last the same herald who had come to Henry demanding ransom returned with a message far different: for he begged permission that the French might bury their dead and separate their slaughtered noblemen and peasants who lay side by side about the field in heaped confusion. And wounded horses screaming with pain lay fetlock deep in gore and mire among the bodies of the French, dealing the wounded mortal blows with their armed hoofs, and killing the dead twice over with their heels.

The French although amazed and terrified at the triumph of Henry's army, did not give in to him until further conflict and a bitter war had raged over all their country; but at last they were compelled to ask for peace, and Henry with his noblemen went to the French court to hear himself acknowledged victor and to receive complete submission from the king whom he had conquered.

First of Henry's conditions was that the king should give to him in marriage the French princess, Katharine, and this demand with all the others was acceded to; but Henry, who knew not the language of the French, had but a sorry time of it with his new bride, for wooing her in her own speech, he said, was harder than the conquering of her kingdom. Henry then returned from the French wars to England where rejoicing was great in his double conquest of a kingdom and a bride. But the conquest of France was doubtful after all, for the new queen of England was able to rule there with the complete possession that a true wife should ever have over her husband,— even though that husband be as great a warrior as Henry the Fifth of England.

THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY THE SIXTH

THE crown that had been worn so nobly by Henry the Fifth was given on the death of this great king to his infant son, also named Henry, who, being a child in cradle, could not take upon himself his royal powers. Until the day that he should become of fitting age to bear himself as king, that the bright crown of Henry the Fifth should not overweigh the brows of a mere infant, the Duke of Gloucester was appointed Lord Protector to rule the English people in the name of Henry.

But how much grief was shown for the departed king, at whose sudden and untimely death the heavens, it was said, should have been hung all with black, day turned to night, and comets — those fearful omens of some future change — burned in the sky! For now the noblemen at court were quarreling with turbulence to win such power as they never would have dared to seek in Henry's reign. There was a quarrel on foot between the Duke of Gloucester, who was Lord Protector over England, and a proud churchman the Bishop of Winchester, their retainers even coming to blows within the streets of London, while other noblemen banded in warring factions in support of them, until the people feared that civil conflict would work the ruin of their country.

They feared still more as young Henry grew to be a man, for he had none of the qualities that were his father's, caring not, to all appearance for the duties of a king. In all his deeds Henry showed that he was fitter to be a herdsman tending his flocks, or a monk sequestered in a cell than to hold a sceptre or do credit to the glories of his father's crown. Henry was forever closeted with books, although he learned but little from them, and forever saying prayers that seemed to bring him little grace or manliness.

So far from seeking any of his royal powers as he grew to manhood, the young king seemed content to leave them to the Duke of Gloucester, and the noblemen and people of the realm bethought them of a proverb that had been a byword once in all of England: that Henry the Fifth, who was born at Monmouth, should win all, but the Henry born at Windsor should lose what had been won — for Windsor was the birthplace of the present king.

It appeared that this dark proverb would fall true even before the late King Henry had been laid within his tomb, for at the time of his funeral, messengers came from France with word of sore disaster there — the English had been defeated by the same French lords that were used to fly before them, towns had been recaptured and in place of Henry, Charles the Dauphin had been proclaimed the rightful king of France.

The noblemen who accompanied the body of the king, bade the messengers to speak their news with softness, or such bitter tidings would be heard by their dead lord within his coffin and cause him to burst its lead and rise, although lifeless, to recapture the fair towns that he had won so recently. Even while they spoke, more news arrived that might indeed have awakened the dead king, for England's bravest general, Lord Talbot, whom the king had dearly loved, was overthrown and captured by the French, and unless a speedy aid were sent, the remainder of the English troops must likewise fall before their enemies or perish for lack of food.

In France there was also another power that had risen against the English,— for a maiden of humble birth, who possessed a strength that seemed to issue from no human source, opposed them. This maiden was called Joan of Arc, and although a shepherd's daughter, accustomed to no ruder task than tending her father's sheep, Joan of Arc believed that by her marvellous aid the French could overthrow their enemies and drive the English from the towns and fortresses still held by them. Joan of Arc had visions, caused, as the French believed, by angels, whereby she would behold herself in armour, leading the French to victory against the English.

Through her alone this maid believed that the town of Orleans, then besieged by all the English with their utmost strength could be delivered into safety; and Joan of Arc went, therefore, to Prince Charles and told him that in her there lay the power to deliver Orleans and save his kingdom.

Charles, before her coming, had heard much about the miracles performed and the visions said to have been beheld by this wonderful maiden, and he determined to make test without her knowledge if these things were true and if Joan of Arc could be deceived by mortal means. With purpose so to deceive her, he caused one of his own noblemen to attire himself as though he were the prince and take his place upon the royal seat, while Charles in humbler garments concealed himself amid a group of courtiers who waited on this duke and did pretended homage unto him. The duke, whose name was Reignier, addressed Joan as though he were the rightful lord of France, demanding if it were indeed true that she could perform the marvels accredited to her. And although in all her life Joan of Arc had never beheld the prince or Reignier, she called the duke by name and bade him to think not that he could thus beguile her, for she knew that he was not the dauphin as he pretended. Then, to the wonder of all that beheld her, she went straight to Charles in his disguise and knelt before him, offering with all humility her aid to save his country.

When Charles beheld this, he was stricken with amazement as were all the nobles that surrounded him — far more, when Joan offered, as a further proof of her divine assurance, to do combat with him; and when the prince was armed, Joan, although a maiden, overcame him, until Charles was glad to cry enough, saying that she was an Amazon and that the sword of Deborah lay in her hand. Charles conferred upon Joan of Arc a high position in his army, and she became the idol of his men at arms, who followed her with complete faith and confidence into the utmost dangers. So great was her power over the rough minds and savage hearts of the French soldiers, that they worshipped her as a saint who had come to their deliverance, and they fought beneath her with a courage no less irresistible than marvellous to behold.

Great wonder was evinced among the English at this beholding a maiden do battle with them; but they believed Joan of Arc to be a hateful witch surrounded with infernal agencies, that she commanded the spirits of the under world, and that her strength, attained by sinister means of magic and the powers of darkness, was no other than the hateful strength of Hell. The English became afraid, believing that no earthly power could prevent the French from victory and their own fear, no less than the confidence of their enemies, became the cause of their defeat, until it seemed that nothing could withhold the French from entering the town of Orleans as Joan of Arc had prophesied.

Although Lord Talbot had by this time gained his liberty from the French he was unable to prevail against the maiden that opposed him. Time after time his men were forced to fly before her and at last Orleans was indeed rescued, while the English, wounded, scattered and dismayed wondered at the ease with which they had been vanquished by the enemies they were accustomed to despise.

There was, then, severe fighting around the walls of Orleans, and Talbot with his followers attacked the city in the dead of night, scaling the walls by means of ladders, so that the French were forced to fly for their lives and even leap from off the ramparts to escape the revengeful swords of the English soldiers. But Joan of Arc with brave words rallied the French troops and reawakened in them the courage that her presence always commanded. Disguised as country people who came to market, Joan, with a few followers entered then the town of Rouen and made a secret signal to the French, informing them where to lead their forces by thrusting from the battlements a lighted torch to guide them. The French then captured Rouen, but on being unable to hold it from the English, they retired with undaunted courage for Joan imbued them with all the wonder of her presence by going among them to rally them, bidding them have no despair for all would yet go well.

This maiden determined then to win if possible the Duke of Burgundy from his alliance against France, for the duke was fighting side by side with Talbot, and had shown himself to be a vigorous supporter of the English cause. When the duke was marching forth from Rouen, which was now so strongly garrisoned that he could use his forces elsewhere, Joan caused Charles to seek a parley with him, and she spoke to Burgundy in such a manner that he seemed bewitched, unable any longer to continue in his purpose. For Joan bade him look upon his country and behold the cities and the towns defaced by the cruel, wasting ruin of the foe with whom he had allied himself. She spoke of patriotism, and the most unnatural wounds that Burgundy had given to the land he should hold dearest; and in her words there lay, to all appearance, a secret power, for the duke, although a former and inflexible enemy to Joan herself, whom he had accused of witchcraft and foul dealing with evil spirits, on hearing her speak thus, placed his sword and army at the service of Prince Charles, swearing that he would have no more to do with the English who he saw were palpably his enemies. And Burgundy seemed bound as though by a spell to repent his former actions, and render in requital faithful service to the French; and by the winning of this duke, Joan of Arc dealt unto the English a blow as shrewd as any they had yet received.

Joan of Arc was not the only cause of England's declining fortunes, for the quarrels between the English nobles were so bitter that the English could no longer fight in harmony against a common foe, and they were fainer to turn their weapons on each other than to draw them side by side to keep the land they once had conquered.

Chief of these warring nobles was Richard, the Duke of York, whose uncle was no other than the Mortimer who sought the throne in the time of Henry the Fourth, aided by the noble Hotspur, who had lost his life at Shrewsbury. Richard had quarreled fiercely with the Duke of Somerset and the court of Henry was divided into parties favouring the one or the other of these noblemen. It had come to pass that Richard, in a former meeting with the Duke of Somerset, had plucked in anger a white rose, bidding his followers do likewise as a token of their friendship, while Somerset with his friends had chosen roses all of red to be the sign of their party; and from this custom came the name of civil wars that were to shake all England with their fury. These wars of the roses resulted from Richard's seeking to win the English crown, as his uncle Mortimer had done before him, and this, although at first it was concealed, was the real issue of his quarrel with the Duke of Somerset.

The enmity of these two noblemen was the undoing of the brave lord, Talbot, who, having gone to besiege the town of Bordeaux, was surrounded there by a great force of Frenchmen led by Joan of Arc and the French prince, Charles. The Duke of Somerset and Richard of York each refused to send any aid to Talbot, quarreling in most unseemly manner as to which one of them must spare the troops to save his life; and while these noblemen delayed so basely, their opportunity was lost and shame of their unworthy action firmly and forever sealed upon their names. For the French closed upon Talbot in a conflict that must surely be fatal to the forces that he led, and most certain death of all to their commander — for Talbot by his bravery and vengeful spirit toward his enemies had caused the French to hate him above all other men, and ten thousand soldiers had taken oath to turn their weapons in the coming encounter on no other than himself.

Talbot had an only son — a youth that had but lately joined his father's army to be taught the art of war; and the presence of this lad, who was his father's dearest hope, the sole support of his increasing age and the only issue of his blood to give the honourable name of Talbot to futurity, caused far more sorrow to Talbot than the thought of his own approaching death. Accordingly, he begged his son to fly from the fatal place and he spoke to the lad of the great name of Talbot that must perish, did he remain. He commanded him as a father to take flight, were it only to revenge his father's death; but the lad refused to hear him, saying that to fly at such a time would only prove that he was no son of the great soldier who begot him. And Talbot and his son prepared to die together, and to sell their lives as dearly as possible to the French, who now were coming to destroy them.

In the terrible battle that followed, young Talbot was soon slain and his father, mortally wounded, was forced to look upon the body of his son borne from the combat by his own soldiers, who laid it before him. Talbot cried out to his son to speak, and he bade the soldiers mark how the lad appeared to smile as though death itself were a thing of scorn, coming as it did from the French he so despised. He bade his followers to place the body of his son within his arms, and embracing it Talbot himself perished, while the French in triumph scattered the last of his supporters and rejoiced to behold their most bitter enemy lifeless before them.

The French, however, were not destined to win what Talbot's overthrow seemed to promise them, for Joan of Arc, whose powers now appeared to fail her, was captured by her enemies and put to a cruel death by fire, being burned at the stake by the English, who were convinced that evil spirits were her ministers and that the French in taking her as their leader had sold themselves forever to the powers of the under world. In the death of this maiden the French were more than requited for the overthrow of Talbot, for Joan of Arc had ever been the source of all their power; in her words and courage had appeared wonders that seemed not of earth, and in her death a grievous injury was worked upon the land that she had saved.

Both countries now were spent and weary from the wars that had continued for many years, and a peace was soon concluded between them. And while the English in this peace apparently were not the losers, their statesmen and the wiser nobles knew too well that they could never hope to regain their former ascendancy in France.

While the wars had been in progress, King Henry the Sixth had grown of a marriageable age and his nobles were of many minds in regard to how their sovereign should choose his queen. It was finally proposed, however, that he should wed the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac which would seal the peace that had just been concluded.

But an English nobleman, the Earl of Suffolk had conceived a plan whereby he could gain much control over the king and become a power in the state, for Suffolk purposed to dominate King Henry by means of the bride that Henry was to marry. Suffolk loved a lady named Margaret, daughter to the French duke, Reignier; and being unable to wed Margaret himself, although he perceived she would return his affection, he intended, were it possible, to make Margaret queen of England, knowing well that Margaret was as resolute of spirit as King Henry was infirm and hesitating in disposition, that she would soon have great control over her husband and through this means and the love that she should bear for Suffolk, he could win a vast control over all England.

In pursuance of this artful plot the Earl of Suffolk bore to Henry the most extravagant tales of Margaret's beauty and perfection; and coupled with his praise strong reasons of state necessity for Henry to marry her. Henry was enkindled by the words of Suffolk to seek the lady Margaret as his queen; and although Margaret should bring with her no bridal portion — a thing unheard of in the marriage of an English king, Henry prepared to make her queen of England. He left France for his own country where Margaret was soon to join him. And Henry had not only effected little in his foreign wars, but was returning to a struggle infinitely nearer to the welfare of his kingdom, where in his uncertain rule it was most probable that an ill fate would overtake his country and himself.

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY THE SIXTH

THE loss of the great realm of France — for lost it was in spite of the apparent English rule that still continued there — caused grief and anger among the noblemen of Henry's court. But they were no less incensed by the unwise marriage of their king, for Margaret, the daughter to Duke Reignier, was not, they maintained, a match for England's greatness either in birth or property, bringing neither the dowry expected of a royal princess, nor the high position due the king who was to honour her by marriage. And the French, aware of Henry's weakness of spirit, had imposed upon this marriage conditions that showed too plainly the scorn with which they regarded the English king. They required that as price for this fair maiden, the lands of Maine and Anjou be given to Duke Reignier her father; and that the expense of bringing Margaret to English shores be laid upon King Henry, bidding him, as though by a direct command, to buy the bride for whose sake he was to forfeit both his pride as king and the benefits due England by his marriage.

King Henry, however, seemed not aware of the great anger his act had caused, or of the contempt evinced among his courtiers for the dowerless maiden he had chosen to become his queen. The lands he had renounced, he deemed but slight in value when compared to the great worth and peerless beauty of Queen Margaret, and as for the English reverses in their wars with France, they were, he said, God's will and not to be avoided.

In the presence of the court, King Henry commanded the Duke of Gloucester, who was still Lord Protector over England, to proclaim the marriage contract; and Gloucester read how it had been agreed that Henry was to wed the lady Margaret. But when the duke came to the shameful words about the provinces where the dead king, Henry the Fifth, had toiled for weary years with armour on his back — those lands now lightly lost for purchase of a bride — he could read no more, but let the document fall from his hand. And Cardinal Beaufort who, when Bishop of Winchester had been a bitter enemy of Gloucester, and even now restrained his hatred only to work future injury upon him, made it appear that Gloucester's sorrow was the result of secret ambition and designs upon the crown. For the Cardinal was jealous of the Lord Protector's position in the government, and determined to ruin him by any means within his power, seeking no less than Gloucester's death.

The Duke of Suffolk, who had artfully arranged the marriage of Henry with Margaret, was likewise angered against Gloucester, while the queen herself beheld in him the strongest opposer to her designs upon her weak husband. And these enemies were forever plotting harm against the Lord Protector, seeking both by treachery or open malice to bring about his downfall.

The Duke of Gloucester had a wife named Eleanor who was a woman of proud and rebellious spirit, being unable to bear with a good grace the thought that any lady in the land, even the queen should be superior to herself. Eleanor bore herself at court as though she were indeed the queen of England, surrounded herself with many attendants and followers, wore costly dresses and rich jewels and treated all that she encountered with the utmost pride and arrogance.

Eleanor was forever urging her husband to seek for greater power in the state, and would drop a thousand hints how easy it would be for him to take the crown, telling him once that she had dreamed that Henry and the hated Margaret kneeled to her in the cathedral, presenting her with a bright diadem which they placed upon her head. She bade her lord stretch forth his hand to take the crown whose glory was so easily to be attained, and then, said she, together they would lift their heads so high as not to glance again upon the humble earth, or give a thought to the more lowly station whence they had arisen to such honour.

Gloucester, who was loyal to King Henry, disliked exceedingly to hear Eleanor speak in such a manner. He had at heart none of the ambition of his wife, nor any desire save to be of service to the kingdom and to acquit himself well of the great office that he held in trust. He blamed Eleanor for the ambitious thoughts that were, he said, as cankers to her mind; and he refused to entertain a single design against the king who was his lord — he would rather die, he said, than be false to his high power or dethrone the son of his great brother, the dead king. But Gloucester, while resolute in what he knew to be his duty, desired eagerly to crush the powerful enemies who surrounded him, chief of whom was Cardinal Beaufort who formed many intrigues against him, setting snares and collecting false informers to undermine his power and work his death.

The arrogance and pride of the lady Eleanor was not the least of Queen Margaret's reasons for desiring the ruin of the Duke of Gloucester; for Eleanor took little pains to hide the contempt she felt for Margaret who was, as Eleanor considered, a beggar who had gained her place through the mistaken charity of the king, her husband. Once Eleanor went so far as to say that the value of the gown she wore was greater than all Margaret's estate; that the queen had been dignified too highly above the humble station of her birth, that there were among Eleanor's own ladies many who were nobler than Margaret; and these proud words had been repeated to the queen.

Margaret entertained a secret affection for the Duke of Suffolk to whom she now turned in her anger against Eleanor. She also expressed to him the contempt she held for her own husband, for she said that she thought King Henry would resemble in his courage and manly graces the noble Duke of Suffolk himself, who had run a tilting in the honour of her love and stolen the hearts of all French ladies. How utterly was she deceived! For Henry's courage served only to count his beads so many times a day. His weapons were not swords but the sayings of the prophets and apostles. His tilt yard was his study, and he loved the brazen images of holy saints far more than the most lovely lady in his realm. He ought to have been pope, said she, and ruled in Rome. That were a fit station for his holiness. And the queen cried out against the humility that Henry showed to his protector, the Duke of Gloucester, who was king in all but name, while Eleanor, the duke's wife, swept through the court like an empress with troops of ladies at her heels. Margaret continued that all the lords and noblemen who hated her and who opposed King Henry's claim upon the throne caused her not half the anger and vexation of the haughty duchess, Eleanor. She was resolved to be revenged, and she begged the Duke of Suffolk to assist her in working some great mischief upon Eleanor, either to bring about her death or at least to work the complete undoing of her exalted state at court.

Suffolk bade the queen content herself. He had conceived a plan, he said, whereby he would betray dame Eleanor into a snare whence she might never be disentangled. He told the queen that his purpose would prove to Eleanor as a limed twig, and yet appear so attractive to her that she needs must light upon it. For Suffolk had prepared a plot that would cause Eleanor to work her own disgrace and ruin; and Cardinal Beaufort and the Duke of York, with the Duke of Buckingham and other noblemen had joined with Suffolk to disgrace her, hoping by this means to overthrow her hated husband, Gloucester, and take away his power over the king.

In those days, designing persons would often employ witchcraft and the powers of darkness to reveal to them futurity, and Suffolk had contrived to tempt the lady Eleanor, to seek such means as these to learn the state of her own future fortunes, although to do so was a crime punishable by death. Suffolk had engaged an artful impostor named Hume to lead her to a certain conjurer who had the power to summon forth dark spirits from the under world, and Suffolk hoped that Eleanor would be induced to seek this wizard and thus betray herself. He had prepared for Eleanor's immediate detection, and that she be taken in her guilt at once before

King Henry, who would doubtless visit her with heavy punishment.

Hume addressed himself to Eleanor with skill and cleverness, calling her in a significant manner "your Majesty" and when in amazement she questioned him as to his purpose in giving her such title, he replied that if she would follow his counsel she might soon become as great as he had named her. He bade her confer with the conjurer and learn King Henry's fate and her own future. Strong in this knowledge, said he, she could overcome her enemies and win whatever she desired. When Eleanor consented to this proceeding, Hume informed the Duke of Suffolk and the other noblemen, that she was prepared to call upon infernal powers to aid her in designs against the crown.

Eleanor, indeed, had been only too ready to visit the conjurer, who prepared by various powerful spells and incantations to summon from the bowels of the earth a fiend who should reply to all that might be asked. And in her presence the conjurer commenced his terrifying art, first making a blest circle from whose bounds the evil being he should summon might not pass to do them injury; he then uttered the strange words that penetrated through the earth, and dark spirit rose from the under world and appeared before them.

When the question was put to this apparition, what should be the fate of England's king, it answered that the duke still lived who should depose Henry from the throne, but that Henry should outlive this duke, although at last he must die a violent death. On asking for the future of the Duke of Suffolk, the fiend said, "By water shall he die and take his end," and it then uttered a warning for the Duke of Somerset, the enemy to Richard of York, saying, "Let the Duke of Somerset avoid castles; safer shall he be upon the sandy plains," and crying out then that it could bear no more the spirit vanished with a clap of thunder.

At this, the Duke of York and the Duke of Buckingham burst into the presence of the conjurer, and conveyed dame Eleanor with her accomplices before the king. And Henry was so stricken with horror at their crime that he prepared a bitter punishment for them, commanding that the conjurer and his assistants be put to instant execution, while Eleanor after three days' open penance on the streets, barefoot, with placards on her back proclaiming all her treachery, be banished to the Isle of Man and nevermore return to her own country.

The utmost grief was shown by the Duke of Gloucester, who was forced now to behold his own dear wife whom he loved tenderly become the laughter and scorn of the insulting rabble, who followed her about the streets with mocking and ill favoured jests, reading the sentences pinned to her garments and laughing when the rough and flinty stones, where she was forced to tread, wounded her tender feet. Eleanor bade her husband farewell with utter sadness, saying that she knew too well that his enemies would soon have him in a plight as bitter as her own — his star was set, she said, and she beheld the downfall of his house. And Eleanor was led away to banishment, bearing her fate with calm resignation and a pride that became her far better than her former lofty arrogance.

It seemed that the words of Eleanor were to fall true with greater swiftness than she herself had dreamed. For the king, while he entertained no anger against Gloucester, had bidden him resign his power as Lord Protector, saying that he would himself conduct the affairs of his country from that day forth, and require no over lord to direct him further in matters of state. And Gloucester rendered up to Henry the staff that he had carried as a sign of his protectorship, replying to the king that he resigned his power with gladness and content of spirit, even as he had received it from Henry's noble father.

But Cardinal Beaufort, the Duke of Suffolk, and all the artful and ambitious men who wished the Duke of Gloucester's ruin, were not content with depriving him of his authority. They now caused Henry to summon him to court, where they laid upon him a great burden of accusations, whence the duke could hardly hope to free himself. Until the day when Gloucester should be brought to trial, these nobles, in spite of Henry's futile efforts to restrain them, cast him into prison, and the charge of his safe keeping was given to Cardinal Beaufort, his most bitter enemy.

Queen Margaret and the nobles who had thus overthrown Gloucester, feared lest Henry should disbelieve the charges against him, or offer him a pardon in spite of them. Being resolved upon his death, the conspirators against him consulted how it might best be effected, and they arranged that Gloucester be murdered in prison before he ever should be brought to trial. In this wicked proceeding, Queen Margaret showed a great hardness of heart and pitiless desire for revenge. For when Suffolk suggested that Gloucester be put to death sleeping or waking by any means however foul, she cried out that he spoke most resolutely, urged him not to relent from that ill deed and besought him to slay Gloucester with no thought save of gladness at his death. Suffolk then sent assassins to the prison who murdered Gloucester while he slept, arranging his garments and the bed whereon he lay, as though his death were caused by natural means. Suffolk then informed the king who was come to hear the charges against Gloucester, that the duke had died in prison of an unknown malady.

But Henry, stricken with the utmost grief and horror at the death of his beloved uncle, refused to believe the words of Suffolk or of the Cardinal, who swore together that Gloucester had been treated with all kindness in his confinement — that they knew not of his death, or what had caused it, protesting their innocence so eagerly that this alone in a far-seeing person would have been sufficient to cast suspicion upon them.

The king then bade the Earl of Salisbury to view the body of the murdered duke and to determine, were it possible, by what means his death had been effected. The earl brought word that violent hands had been laid upon him, and that every evidence was plain that Gloucester had been foully dealt with. Bearing the body before King Henry, Salisbury bade him to look on the clenched hands, the staring eyes, the blood that remained in the face, instead of having returned as was natural in death to the labouring heart; and looking with horror on the Duke of Suffolk, Salisbury called him "murderer" and begged his majesty to spare no pains to put him to instant punishment. The Cardinal, too, he suspected; saying that when a heifer was found dead and bleeding fresh, and by its side a butcher one could not but conclude how the beast was slain; that he who found the body of a partridge in the nest of the kite could not but think how it had met its death, although the bird of prey soared with an unbloodied beak far from the place of slaughter. The death of Gloucester, said the earl, was even clearer in its cause, and even more palpable to thought.

The king, who was greatly moved by the hard fate of his beloved uncle, Gloucester, showed for once a resolution that seemed foreign to his nature, for he ordered Suffolk into instant banishment, saying if he ever be found in England or any portion of the English dominions the world should not be ransom for his life. Suffolk was forced to take his leave forever from the queen he loved, and seek no more for power in the land where he was now a disgraced outcast. And the king prepared for the trial of Cardinal Beaufort who, however, was destined never to answer the grave charges against him; for, whether from remorse, or fear for his own future fate the Cardinal fell ill of a severe fever that resulted in his death. And to those who attended at his bedside, his guilty heart was disclosed in all its wickedness, for he would cry out strangely about Gloucester, saying that he would confess, or bidding the ghost of him he had murdered to torture him no more but leave him to make his peace with Heaven ere he died.

It seemed, indeed, as if a divine power of justice followed those who were guilty of this shameful murder. For the Duke of Suffolk was slain as he fled from England by pirates who captured the vessel that conveyed him. And thus the saying of the evil spirit came to pass, for Suffolk died and took his end by water even as had been prophesied.

But although Henry in the death of the Cardinal and of the hard hearted and ambitious Duke of Suffolk had escaped two chief designers against his crown and life, there were still many powerful enemies near his person, who awaited only their good vantage to confound him utterly. Chief of these was Richard, Duke of York, who was seeking to become king. Richard had been given the command of a large troop of soldiers who were to put down a rebellion that had arisen against Henry among the chiefs of Ireland; and Richard believed this task would prove a heaven sent opportunity to seize the crown. Wanting soldiers for his purpose, he was now possessed of them, and he retired to Ireland with the intent of nourishing there a mighty army, calling to his rebellious banner the very enemies he had been sent forth to subdue. When his force should be sufficient in its power, Richard determined to return to England as invader, do battle with King Henry and leave no man alive who might dispute his claim upon the throne.

In the meanwhile, Richard plotted to arouse rebellion and discord that should shake all England in his absence and prevent his enemies from maintaining any sort of order until he was prepared to fall upon them. With this intent he took into his service a bold rascal named John Cade, who was well known as a sturdy soldier and a man of rash and fiery temper. Cade for a purse of gold would fight against all odds, and preferred the turbulence of an armed camp, plunder, rioting and confusion to the quiet and contentment of a state at peace. Cade, moreover, would suffer any torture ere he would betray his confederates, or be false to those whom he had bound himself to serve.

This hot-headed rascal was induced by Richard to make a false claim upon the crown through a feigned relationship to the Mortimer who had been overthrown in the fight at Shrewsbury. Cade maintained that a son to Edmund Mortimer was stolen from his cradle and reared, ignorant of his great birth, amid humble surroundings. This son, said Cade, was no other than himself, and now aware of his claim to royalty he would enforce it by all means within his power. And Cade ordered that any who opposed his claim, should meet swift justice as a traitor to his king.

With an army of idle and rebellious vagabonds, jailbirds, the offscourings of city streets — all ill-favoured persons that sought gold without labour and hated the more fortunate, Cade marched towards London. On his way he recruited his ranks by opening the prisons and setting free all who were confined there. He won the hearts of the ignorant and discontented by marvellous promises of the wonders he would perform when king of England, for he said that all things, then, should be in common; the lowest beggar and the proudest nobleman should have an equal share of wealth; the laws that oppressed the poor — all laws in fact — should be abolished, and the king himself should prove sufficient law to all the realm; all documents of state, said Cade, should be publicly burned; wine should flow as water in his dominions; and knowledge how to read and write should be crimes punishable by death.

The rabble that composed Cade's army were ready to follow him into any danger believing that England was to enter on a state of happiness and plenty unparalleled in all the history of the world — a heaven on earth, where none need labour to support himself, where food and drink were to be had for the asking and the people gain their ancient liberties. And at head of his army of rogues Cade entered London, overcoming in battle a force of soldiers sent against him by the king.

But the superior temper of the nobles and gentlemen who surrounded Henry was not long in manifesting itself, for the Duke of Buckingham and a lord named Clifford, who was Henry's most faithful supporter, addressed the rabble in a speech that soon won them from the impostor who led them. These lords said that the king sent greeting to his subjects whom he would pardon, one and all if they did yield to mercy while it was offered them; and they spoke of Henry the Fifth, at whose name the people tossed their caps into the air, so greatly had this king been loved even among the basest of his subjects. The noblemen then called Cade, their leader, an impostor who had no home to fly to nor any means of support except in riot and turmoil such as he had aroused. The French, said they, would soon be lording it in London streets when Cade was crowned. And Cade was forced to take to his heels, pursued now by his own followers for Buckingham had set a heavy price upon his life; and it was not long before this rogue was slain and his head brought to King Henry.

But the turmoil and dissension stirred up by the rascal Cade, had served only too well the purpose of the Duke of York, who now had landed on the English coast with a formidable army composed of his own soldiers and the savage warriors of Ireland who had enlisted under his banner. Richard of York marched on London, claiming, to deceive the king, that he came only to punish the Duke of Somerset for misconducting the affairs of France where the duke had ruled as deputy to Henry.

This in itself was a piece of insolence almost unparalleled, for the punishment of Somerset, were it deserved should have been administered by none but Henry himself. No subject should have dared to make such a demand, which was indeed inspired only through the meekness of King Henry, who knew not his own rights, nor the contempt and slight regard with which his enemies esteemed him.

Henry in great fear of the stout army that York as an invader was leading against him, gave order that the Duke of Somerset be imprisoned in the Tower of London as Richard of York demanded, sending word to Richard that he should now disband his forces for their purpose had been effected.

On hearing this, York made a pretence of discharging his soldiers, bidding them, however, to meet him on the next day at Saint George's field when he would pay them for their services. And he hastened in advance of his own men to interview the king, seeking another cause for quarrel with him.

The Duke of York had already won from the cause of Henry two of his most steadfast supporters — the Earl of Salisbury and his son, the Earl of Warwick — whom he had convinced of the justice in his claim to Henry's crown. And while these lords still waited in attendance upon Henry, they were prepared upon an instant's notice to join the Duke of York and serve his cause with the same loyalty that once they showed unto the present king. The service of these lords would not unprobably decide the issue of the coming contest, for they were skilled in arts of war and possessed a force of soldiers that would prove a great addition to York's cause.

The queen, whose proud spirit could not bear that York should command her husband, had set the Duke of Somerset at liberty and when York came before the king, Queen Margaret and Somerset confronted him.

York in an outburst of rage showed on the instant his whole purpose for he addressed Henry with unbridled insolence, calling him "false king," and demanding the reason that Henry had thus broken faith with him. He then said that while he had just called Henry "king," he revoked the name, for Henry was more fit to grasp a palmer's staff than hold a sceptre,— that bright sign of dreadful and kingly power that Henry could not and dared not employ. He commanded Henry to give way to him, the Duke of York, whom Heaven had created as Henry's ruler; and he called to his support his two friends, the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, whom he called his two brave bears that with the very shaking of their chains should fright all men that remained unshaken in their service to King Henry. York also summoned to his side his two sons, Edward and the hump-back, Richard, of whom it was said that his manners and spirit were more crooked than his shape. Casting defiance at Henry, the queen and all who still supported them, York with his turbulent followers then quitted the king's presence — not, however, before the Earl of Clifford vowed that in the coming conflict he would destroy him — a vow that York and Warwick answered by warning Clifford, while the deformed Richard bade Clifford to make his peace with Heaven where his enemies should shortly send him.

Thus began the terrible wars of the roses that were to end by York's sons, Edward and Richard, becoming kings of England. The forces of King Henry and the Duke of York met in battle on the field of Saint Albans, and in this fight the Earl of Clifford was slain by York's own hand, while Richard, York's son, who in spite of his misshapen body was a soldier of great skill and daring, overcame and slew the Duke of Somerset. And it so chanced that Somerset was slain at the doorway of an inn called The Castle and that the words of the spirit summoned before Lady Eleanor were thus a second time come true, although in a way far different from what all had imagined.

Lord Clifford, who was slain by the Duke of York, had a son who was destined to become the greatest champion of Henry's cause, and young Clifford on beholding the body of his dead father swore that he would never rest until a complete vengeance had overtaken York and all his house. For the sight of his dead father steeled his heart against all thoughts of mercy; and caused him to become a restless and inexorable enemy to all York's followers, inspiring them with fear and hatred against him.

The battle in the meanwhile had gone badly with the forces of King Henry, who was compelled to fly to London with the queen and all his followers ere they should all be slain or captured by the Duke of York. And Margaret became the chief commander of her husband's fortunes, conducting the affairs of his army and the emergencies of his defeat with a courage and resolution that seemed beyond a woman, showing herself, though wicked, possessed of an indomitable spirit that prolonged for many years the struggle for the crown between the rival claims of York and Lancaster.

THE THIRD PART OF KING HENRY THE SIXTH

WHEN the army of King Henry was defeated, there was great rejoicing among the noblemen that followed the Duke of York, for they now hoped to behold their lord upon the throne of England. The hump-backed Richard brought to his father the head of the Duke of Somerset. And although York's other sons had worked fierce vengeance on his enemies, he cried that Richard had deserved the best of all and that Richard's trophy was the fairest sight he had beheld that day.

The Duke of York with his followers, determined then to enter the parliament-house at London, believing that King Henry would assemble all his party in that place, for York had planned to occupy the chair of state, and from that proud position to defy Henry, when he should enter, bid him resign all claim upon his title and in case he should refuse call soldiers to attack him; and York's followers remarked that unless the weakling, Henry, utterly renounced the name of king upon the spot, that assembly should be called "The Bloody Parliament."

When Henry and his lords came to the parliament-house, this most unwelcome sight awaited them, for they beheld the Duke of York seated in the chair of highest dignity; by his side sat the ambitious Earl of Warwick in full armour, York's sons, Edward and Richard, were also near him, eager to draw swords against the king, and other noblemen with weapons in their hands surrounded him. They gazed on the approaching king as though he came to do them open battle, as though the hall of state, where they assembled, were besieged by an advancing enemy; and York was fully prepared to outrage its great dignity and to profane the memory of many kings who had devoted it to peace and justice, by doing battle in that consecrated place.

King Henry bade his followers to behold the sturdy rebel who usurped the seat that none but kings should occupy, profaning it with arms and open defiance of its sacred name. He besought his lords to remain faithful to him in his hour of danger, and bade Lord Clifford and the Earl of Northumberland to remember how the Duke of York had slain their fathers, and how they had vowed to be revenged on York and all his house.

"The hope of that revenge," said Clifford, "makes me mourn in steel."

Northumberland expressed himself with equal bitterness, praying Heaven to punish him if he did not fully requite his father's death. Other noblemen besought King Henry to attack the rebel instantly, to hurl him from the chair whereon he sat and put him to a sudden execution, for York once dead, said they, his soldiers would soon fly and the crown become assured to Henry with no further bloodshed.

But Henry had not the courage to attempt what they advised him, for he feared the soldiers of his enemies, and dared not to defy their power in so bold a manner. He bade his lords have patience and think upon the holy place where they were assembled, for never, said he, should they profane it by their swords. Frowns, words and threats should be his only weapons; and he addressed the Duke of York, commanding him to leave his throne and kneel for mercy at the feet of his lawful sovereign.

York replied most haughtily, bidding the king in his turn to kneel to him, acknowledge his due title to the crown, and ask pardon for usurping the high power that belonged to the house of York. He was prepared, he said, to prove his right upon the spot; and if Henry would not hear him, his sword must plead his cause in battle. Edward and Richard loudly besought their father to tear the crown from the usurping Henry's head and place it on his own, to sound his drums and trumpets and manifest his power, when Henry, they said, would become afraid and do whatever they commanded him.

The Earl of Warwick, however, who observed that the king was strangely agitated, bade them be silent and let Henry speak, for he believed that in so doing, Henry, who had not at his command the arguments that could be marshalled to prove his right, would betray himself even further into the power of the house of York; that Henry's own lords in hearing him plead as though before a court of justice for the crown his father and grandfather had worn with such nobility, would behold his weakness and fall from him. And, indeed, the Earl of Warwick's purpose was successful beyond his utmost hopes, for Henry addressed his enemies with unworthy mildness, asking them if it were not lawful to adopt an heir as Richard the Second had adopted the great king, Henry the Fourth — then, said he, his title to the crown would be clear and evident. Not only did Henry speak in this unwise manner of King Richard (who had been compelled by force of arms and fear of instant death to resign his title) but he spoke of the great deeds performed in France by Henry the Fifth, forgetting that his own weak rule had lost that land forever.

The effect of this ignoble speech was shown in the action of the Duke of Exeter, who hitherto had served King Henry with the utmost loyalty. Exeter now said that in his conscience he believed that York should gain the throne in place of Henry, and in the presence of Henry whom he had served so long, he prepared to join Warwick among those whom he had but lately considered as traitors both to England and their rightful king.

Lord Clifford and Lord Northumberland, however, defied Warwick with great bitterness, saying that whether Henry's claim be right or wrong, they vowed to fight in his defense; and Clifford cried out that the ground should gape and swallow him alive ere he would kneel before the duke that slew his father.

Warwick on hearing them demanded in great anger that Henry instantly renounce the title of king, or he would fill the house with soldiers and write over the chair of state York's claim upon the kingdom in the blood of Henry and his followers. He stamped his foot to summon soldiers, who appeared with drawn swords in all the entrances, prepared, upon command, to make attack on Henry and his followers.

Now did Henry in fear of death perform the most ignoble act of all his reign, give ground to his enemies that never was wholly reclaimed from them and alienate forever the affections of his own supporters. When Henry beheld the soldiers that surrounded him, he forgot in utter terror both his rights as king and the proud bearing that befitted his royal station. And he implored the Earl of Warwick to hear him but one word, saying that if the Duke of York would allow him to reign in peace and contentment for the remainder of his natural life, he would confirm the crown to York and his heirs forever after. By this base proposal Henry lost completely the respect of the brave lords that had supported him, for Clifford and Northumberland cried out in rage on this unmanly action, saying that they would not stop to hear so shameful an agreement. How much wrong, said they, had Henry done both to the prince, his son, and the great kings who were his ancestors! They quitted the parliament with bitter words, saying that in the faint-hearted Henry there lay no spark of honour, and that they now hoped he would be slain on the field or forced to live in shameful peace, abandoned and despised by all the world.

Northumberland and Clifford then informed the queen of the disgrace that Henry had brought upon them — how the prince's title had been lost forever, how Henry in spite of his great birth had shown himself contemptible beyond all words and how they had refused to serve beneath a ruler who lacked utterly all sense of shame, richly deserving to lose the crown. And to the king then came Queen Margaret with her son the former Prince of Wales, so basely sacrificed by his faint-hearted father.

But the followers of York were filled with joy at this compact, for the duke could not but hope by course of years and time of life to survive Henry. Or what would be easier than secretly to make away with such a king who governed with so weak a rule that his subjects would not feel their loss or know that the feeble Henry ceased to live until the stronger hand of York were laid upon them? The Earl of Warwick and the other nobles cried out now that York and Lancaster were reconciled. They bade their duke embrace the king in pledge of new and everlasting friendship; and York with all his followers in triumph quitted the parliament-house, leaving King Henry forsaken in that place of state, where Margaret and her wronged son discovered him.

Margaret said she wished she never had beheld her husband and never born a son to so unnatural a father. Fainer would she have died a maid than wedded a king unworthy of the name, unworthy, indeed, even to be called a man, for that he could be put to shame in noble action by the humblest peasant in his realm. She bade him to think not that he would be safe in this agreement. Such safety, she said, is found by the trembling lamb surrounded by wolves. Had she been there the soldiers would have tossed her on their pikes before she would have granted such an act. It was an act, she said, to make King Henry creep untimely to his grave, crowded out of life by those who sought his place and high authority. And she added that until it were repealed, and her son, so basely disinherited, given back his rights, she would divorce herself from Henry's table and his bed, refuse to look upon his face or call him by the name of "husband." Then Margaret in anger left her lord and prepared to follow Clifford and Northumberland, saying that while they would refuse to fight for Henry, nevertheless they would support her cause, for though a woman she would lead an army against York and win again the rights that had been yielded to him with more than a woman's weakness.

The Duke of York, however, did not think long of the promise he had given Henry, but prepared to take the crown at once, and to confound his enemies so they might nevermore disturb him, or question his right to the high power he had won. Edward and Richard, his sons, urged him to do further battle at once against the house of Lancaster, saying that this agreement was a breathing space wherein their enemies might win back all their former power. When York spoke of his oath, and said that in doing this it would be broken and he lose his honour forever, Edward replied that for his part he would break a thousand oaths to reign one year; and Richard, who was no less dishonest but more crafty than his brother, said that the Duke of York need not even forswear himself or break the smallest fragment of his vow. His oath, said Richard, had not been taken before a true and lawful magistrate, for Henry being a usurper had not authority, and could compel no man to do his bidding except by violence and unjust means. The oath, therefore, was void and had no binding power. And Richard bade his father to think how sweet a thing it was to wear a crown, within whose narrow circle lay all that poets feigned of bliss and joy — all the wealth and honour of a country; until the Duke of York cried out enough, saying that he would be king, or die in fighting to attain the crown.

But Margaret, with Clifford and Northumberland and all the nobles that deserted Henry, now opposed the Duke of York before the very gates of his own town. They had gathered beneath their banners a force of twenty thousand men — far more than York could hope to muster, and they met the duke in a severe battle near a place called Wakefield where the odds were great against him.

The Duke of York had a young son named Rutland, who being but a child had taken no part in the quarrel of his father against the king; but this boy, with his tutor, had been near the place of battle, and was captured by the angry Clifford who slew him without a thought of mercy. For Clifford was so enraged at the death of his father, who though an old man had been slain on the field by York's own hand, that he had sworn to leave no member of York's family alive — and neither the innocence of this tender child nor the pity aroused in the hearts of the soldiers that had captured him could move the hard-hearted Clifford to spare his life. And Clifford, with the blood of the unhappy child upon his sword, sought out the Duke of York, saying that he should not be content until he too had fallen before his vengeance.

It seemed that the triumph of Queen Margaret and Clifford was complete, for after putting to flight the forces of their enemies, they came on York himself, wearied and half dead and fallen far behind the soldiers that deserted him. York was captured by Margaret and her followers, and Margaret spoke to him of Rutland's death and gave him a handkerchief that she had dipped in the child's blood, bidding him, if that he chose to weep to dry his eyes upon it. She crowned him with a paper diadem, and when Lord Clifford moved to slay him, bade him wait for she would hear the prayers that York would say before he died. And York then wept, and said that he washed away with tears the blood of his sweet boy. He gave again the handkerchief to Margaret, bidding her make boast of it, for if she told the story right, even his foes would shed fast-falling tears and say it was a piteous deed. Lord Clifford then turned his sword against him, and Margaret bade her soldiers take the traitor's head and set it with its paper crown upon the city gates, so York might overlook the town of York, where once he ruled.

But York's two sons, Edward and Richard, had fled and had collected as well as they were able, all who were left alive from out their scattered army. Other nobles joined them until they were prepared once more to make headway against Queen Margaret. And when they heard of the death of their father and the murder of their innocent brother, Rutland — how this had been effected by Clifford and the heartless queen, and how the blood of Rutland had been offered to his sorrowing father at the moment of his own death, Edward and Richard could hardly contain themselves, and vowed that they would not rest nor take an instant's ease before these monsters met a fate of equal bitterness. And Edward and Richard at the head of a great force of soldiers met the army of Margaret on Towton Field, where they completely overcame all of her forces, routed the lords that aided her and forced Margaret herself to fly from England, where now there was no safety for any of her followers.

In this battle, retribution overtook Lord Clifford who died of grievous wounds inflicted on him by Richard. For Richard, although misshapen until he seemed not human, was given in his anger a formidable power that enabled him to cope with soldiers far stronger than himself. And the rage of this deformed creature, his gruff voice, grumbling the foulest curses on his enemies, the evil that in battle seemed to leap forth from his heart and shine upon his countenance, produced in all who fought with him a fear that seemed not earthly — as terrible indeed as the appearance of the prodigy that opposed them.

There was now no further hindrance to Edward's being crowned king of England, and the ceremony was speedily performed in the presence of those nobles who had fought to place the crown on his father's head and who transferred their loyalty, as a matter of course, to Edward, on the Duke of York's unhappy death. Edward gave to his brothers the dukedoms that were nearest to the crown, creating George who was nearest to his own age and higher, therefore, in rank than the ill-favoured Richard, Duke of Clarence, while Richard was appointed Duke of Gloucester — an ominous title for the murder of the duke who lately held it, had cast a shadow on that name.

When Margaret's forces were defeated, King Henry fled to Scotland, and liking not the land where he was forced to take his refuge, he stole in disguise over the borderland of England for no other purpose than to behold again the country where he was now a hunted exile. In his wandering, he fell into the hands of huntsmen to whom he had revealed himself by musing aloud within their hearing, upon the most unhappy change that had befallen him. For Henry had filled the air with sighs and cried out that his land was native to him no longer. His place was filled, his scepter wrung from his hands; no man would come to him again to seek redress, and no bending knee would do him homage as a king.

Henry also had called on the name of his wife, Margaret, who had fled across the sea to seek the aid of Lewis, King of France, saying that he hoped her suit would prosper at Lewis' hands; and when the huntsmen heard these words, they knew that he who stood before them was the deposed king and conveyed him as a captive to Edward. And Henry was confined in the Tower of London and kept there a close prisoner.

When Edward had been crowned, he soon began to show a recklessness of purpose and a disregard of the noblemen who were his friends that speedily awakened their anger. For the new king conducted himself in a haughty and imperious manner, treating them as absolute inferiors, preferring, as it seemed, to hold his power by arousing fear in his retainers rather than make the name of king loved and revered as had been done by Henry the Fifth without the loss of any of his high authority.

Edward, as it chanced, had sent the Earl of Warwick as ambassador to France for the purpose of requesting the hand of Lewis' sister, the princess Bona, whom he desired to make queen of England, thinking, and not unwisely, that alliance with the French through marriage would make firm the ties that bound him to his throne. Before Warwick had returned with word of his success, however, King Edward had determined to wed elsewhere, for he had conceived a passion for one of his own subjects, a lady of great virtue, wit and good appearance but of humbler rank than Edward and not to be considered for the dignity of queen by any ruler who held at his heart the welfare of his subjects or respect for his great title. This lady was, moreover, a widow, and possessed of several children, who, as she said, the king would like but little to hear name him father. Being of excellent sense and spirit, she plainly beheld the difficulties that would attend her exalted rank — indeed, she would have refused it but that Edward pressed her beyond all power of resistance, commanding her, as her own sovereign to obey his royal pleasure. And Edward sent letters to the Earl of Warwick, bidding him return to England for his embassy was now to no purpose

— England's queen was chosen and there could be no further thought of binding France to the English throne by marriage.

It happened that Queen Margaret had come before King Lewis to beseech his aid for Henry at the same time that Warwick requested him to confer the hand of Princess Bona on King Edward; and the court of France beheld the bitterness of these two enemies, each of whom bade Lewis have no trust in the fair words of the other which were against all faith and honesty. But Lewis, who thought only of advantage to himself, beholding that Edward was in power and Henry an outcast of no strength, save the strength that France might lend him, listened more favourably to the Earl of Warwick and determined that the princess should become the bride of Edward. It was at this time and Lewis had just consented to this alliance when word arrived of Edward's sudden marriage.

The anger of King Lewis at thus being trifled with was exceeded only by the rage of Warwick, who protested that he knew not of this marriage, that Edward in performing it had grossly deceived him, and that he would have no further dealing with the false king, but pull him from the throne by violence, doing justice to the injured Henry. Turning to Margaret the Earl of Warwick then asked her pardon for the injuries that he had worked upon her. Henceforth, said he, she would find in him the truest friend of all, for through his aid her husband should regain his crown. And Warwick asked Lewis to aid him in a war against King Edward, for in this way alone, said Warwick, could the insult done to Lewis' gracious sister be avenged.

A troop of soldiers was at once prepared, and Lewis said that Queen Margaret with a far larger army should soon follow Warwick to England. Lewis then bade the messenger return and defy the English king, saying to him that Lewis of France was sending over masquers who should revel it with Edward and his bride, while Margaret bade the messenger to say that her robes of sorrow were now laid aside and that she had again put armour on.

Warwick's soldiers reached England with such swiftness that they caught King Edward off his guard and took him prisoner. Henry was set at freedom, and the house of Lancaster returned to all its former power. The brothers of King Edward, and his friends and followers, in their turn were now forced to become exiles, and it seemed as if the wars that for so long had shaken England were at end.

But the scheming Richard, brother to King Edward, although friends and enemies were equally hateful to him, who seemed himself to be formed all of hatred with no love for any human being, no joy save in gaining power over others and working injury upon them, now determined if possible to set his brother free and aid him to escape to Flanders. For Richard, who aimed at no less than to become king himself, must first behold his brother safe upon the throne.

Richard, therefore, with a company of friends contrived in an artful manner to accomplish his brother's freedom, who, when hunting was torn from the guard that accompanied him, and hurried on shipboard, setting sail at once for Flanders. And there Edward raised an army with such speed that in his turn now he came unawares upon his enemies; Henry was recaptured and sent again into his prison in the tower, while the Earl of Warwick was surrounded by enemies and after a severe battle slain by the hand of Edward. And the fortunes of this contest were again completely changed, for Margaret was still in France occupied there in raising the force of soldiers that King Lewis had promised her; and the power of Warwick had been destroyed as utterly as their own leader, who lay dead upon the field of battle.

When the army of Margaret was at last assembled, and with her son, young Edward, she had arrived at the English coast and prepared for battle, Edward and Richard met her with a great force of soldiers and defeated her so thoroughly that there could never be further thought of her opposing them. Both Margaret and Edward, her son, were taken prisoners; and Edward was slain before his mother's eyes in the same manner that young Rutland had met his death by the sword of Clifford. For the king with his brothers, bidding Margaret to think on that former crime, slew the prince with the same cruelty that Margaret had slain their father, the Duke of York. And Margaret in this way was completely punished, for although hard of heart, the greater measure of her rage had come from York's designs against the prince, her son, who now lay slain before her.

Margaret called on him to speak and knelt beside him, and she begged the king and his brothers to turn their swords against her breast and complete their work of murder. But when Richard turned upon her with uplifted sword and prepared to strike her down, his brothers held his arm bidding him to desist; for Margaret must live, they said, and behold the overthrow of all her high ambitions. And Edward bade his men convey Margaret into some place of captivity until he should decide upon her fate.

Richard, when his brothers had prevented him from slaying Margaret, bade them listen for a piece of news that they should hear before nightfall; he leaped upon his horse and spurred for London where he came to the prison of King Henry and demanded instant admission, saying that he would confer alone with Henry on matters that touched him deeply. Richard bade the unfortunate king prepare for death, and told him how his son was slain and his queen a prisoner in the hands of Edward. And he cruelly murdered the defenseless Henry, who met his end with resignation and, what seemed remarkable in one of his weak spirit, with an utter lack of the fear so often manifested by him.

Thus the line of the great Henrys ceased to exist, and Edward became lawful king of England. Queen Margaret was conveyed to her father's court at Naples under sentence of eternal banishment. And Richard was now left free to weave dark plots against the lives of his own brothers who stood between him and the crown that he resolved to win; and to become, as soon he did, the chief adviser of King Edward who ruled in triumph over all the English dominions.

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD THE THIRD

THE crown of England being assured to the great house of York, Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, determined to be king in place of his brother Edward, who then reigned; for Richard, whom deformity had rendered unfit for ordinary happiness, sought with his whole heart to become greater than the more fortunate persons that surrounded him; being unable to share the joys of these, or follow the happy occupations of a time of peace. For how could Richard court his fellow nobles, or present a pleasing aspect to a lady's eye,— Richard who had been born before his time, misshapen and half finished, bearing a hideous mountain on his back and compelled to be a thing apart from all his fellows? Thus, being barred from all soft pleasure and all gentler sort of happiness that men delight in, he believed a royal crown to be his utmost fortune; since he could not command love, he was determined to awaken fear, and he resolved to destroy all who should come between him and his intention of becoming king. And the purposes of Richard were deadly, all the more so that he hid them in his heart and showed the world an open and deceiving face of friendship.

Richard could not hope to become king so long as his brother, the Duke of Clarence was alive, for Clarence was older than himself, and nearer therefore to the royal line of Edward. Even before Clarence could rule, the two young sons of Edward must come to power; and these children, although very young, were quick of wit and pleasing of appearance, of such tender and bright natures that it seemed as if all England must be happy in their reign. Richard secretly meditated evil against his nephews, and also against his brother, the Duke of Clarence, seeking by what means he could effect his death. For Edward, the king, had been stricken with a sudden illness, whence Richard hoped that he would never rise; and if Richard could murder the Duke of Clarence, he knew that he could then effect the ruin of his nephews and seize upon the crown that he desired.

King Edward, who then lay upon his sick-bed, was prone to believe in divinations of all sorts, in the workings of witchcraft and the power of strange dreams to foretell the future; and Richard, who was aware of this, determined by means of false prophecies and dangerous sayings that he caused to be spread abroad, to awaken the king's hatred against his brother, Clarence. Richard hoped that Clarence would be cast into prison and put to death there for some crime that should be foretold against him; and a prophecy reached Edward's ears that soon effected the first part of Richard's purpose, for it told that one whose name began with G would murder the king's sons and seek the throne. Edward who thought not of Richard (the Duke of Gloucester), believed this prophecy to mean his more honest brother, Clarence, whose first name indeed was George; and Clarence was placed under arrest and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where the late king, Henry the Sixth, had been so recently and darkly murdered.

On his way to prison, Clarence was encountered by Richard, who asked him, with great appearance of surprise, why he was thus attended by armed men; was he under arrest, and if so for what cause? Clarence replied that he had been made prisoner because of an idle prophecy concerning his name of George, which he could not help, and he knew not, said he, why his brother Edward who was wont to be so affectionate had turned against him for so slight a reason.

" No," said Richard, " it is not the king who has imprisoned you. It is the queen, who without doubt has borne false tales against you and laboured for your injury. No man is safe against her displeasure." Richard had designs against the queen and hated her as well as his brother Clarence. He went on to say how the queen and one Mistress Shore ruled all the kingdom, and how ill fortune favoured all that incurred their spite. But Clarence need not fear, continued Richard, for he would win him back to favour with King Edward. And he embraced his brother, saying that he would deliver him ere long, adding, however, when the guard had led Clarence out of hearing: " Deliver you, aye that I will, simple, plain Clarence! Go tread the path that you shall not return, for I will shortly send your soul to Heaven."

The king, who, in his sickness had fallen into a state of fear, and possessed no more that sound and well ordered judgment that would keep him from injustice and prevent him from committing thoughtless actions that later he must repent, had become so angered against the Duke of Clarence that he gave an order for his death. He commanded that Clarence be murdered secretly within his prison cell; and although remorseful pity came upon Edward before this hard-hearted command was executed, until he sent a second order that revoked the harsh decree upon his brother, Richard now could murder Clarence with perfect safety and lay the blame of the murder on Edward, forcing him to think his own command had been obeyed. So Richard gave a warrant for the death of Clarence to assassins that he hired, bidding them to go at once to the Tower and fulfill their wicked errand on his brother.

The Duke of Clarence, without knowing it, had been warned in a terrible dream of his approaching fate. He had dreamed that with his brother Richard he took ship for Burgundy; that together they looked back upon the shores of England they were leaving, and recalled to mind a thousand dreadful times in the wars of York and Lancaster that had befallen them. As they paced along the hatches of their vessel,—a giddy footing — Richard stumbled, and struck Clarence, who had thought to stay him, overboard into the sea. There Clarence dreamed that he was drowned, with dreadful noise of waters in his ears and ugly sights of death that came before his eyes. He beheld the fearful wrecks of vessels scattered on the bottom of the sea, and he thought that on the sands there lay ten thousand men that fishes gnawed upon. Vast heaps of treasure lay there — bars of gold and pearls and precious stones, some of which were lodged in dead men's skulls and shone as if in scorn of the eyes they had displaced. At last, Clarence dreamed, he died; and there began a tempest to his soul, for it crossed the melancholy river that hems in the under world, where he met the mighty Earl of Warwick whom he had betrayed, and Edward, Henry's son, whom he had helped to murder; and a legion of foul fiends surrounded him and howled into his ears with dreadful cries, until in utter fear he started from his slumber unable to think for some time after but that he had been in Hell.

To Clarence, then, there came the murderers who were to work his death; and Richard had commanded them to use all haste in what they were to do, for Clarence, as he said, knew well how to employ the art of speech, and perchance might win them to be merciful if they delayed to hear him beg for life. They stood beside the sleeping man and were prepared to strike him with their swords before he should awaken, when Clarence stirred from slumber and gazed upon them. Beholding in what deadly way they looked on him, he asked them if their purpose were his death; they replied, ay, and bade him prepare at once to meet it for they should not leave that chamber while he lived.

" You hardly have the hearts to tell me so," said Clarence, " and cannot therefore have the hearts to seek my life. How, my friends, have I offended you? "

When they said they came upon the king's orders, Clarence bade them think upon that king of kings, whose law commanded them to do no murder. He besought them to be merciful. He said that before long he would be reconciled with Edward. If the king had paid them for his death, let them go, said he, to his kind brother, Richard, for Richard loved him and would reward them far more generously for his life than Edward for the deed that they intended. At the name of Richard, however, the murderers looked at each other askance and bade him say no more, for it was Richard that had sent them, saying that Richard, whom Clarence had named kind, was as kind as a blighting frost, or snow in harvest time. They then murdered Clarence and drowned his body for concealment in a cask of wine that happened to be near his prison cell; and word was born to Richard that his order had been performed.

Richard then determined to bear word of Clarence's death to the enfeebled king, who was attended by the queen and certain noblemen who were her friends; he would tell it he resolved, in such a manner, so suddenly and with so little preparation in the minds of those that were to hear it, that his news might startle Edward in his illness into a state of grief that must be fatal to him. So, when the queen by chance spoke to Edward of the Duke of Clarence, begging that Edward become reconciled with him, Richard asked if she were jesting at his brother's memory, and also asked if she did not know that the Duke of Clarence were now dead. When the noblemen that were present heard this dreadful question, they became suddenly pale, and Edward in a faltering voice asked if Richard's words were true; the order for Clarence's death, he said, had been reversed and Clarence was to live and receive a royal pardon.

"But Clarence, poor soul," said Richard, "died by your first order, and while a winged Mercury did bear it to the prison, a tardy cripple bore the countermand that came too late to see our brother buried."

Richard with a lively show of grief said then that he prayed to Heaven there were none at Edward's court who were more guilty than the innocent Clarence, and while he rejoiced inwardly at Clarence's murder and the way that he had imparted it to Edward, he wept false tears and feigned a heavy sorrow.

Edward also wept, and bade his noblemen convey him to his chamber for this news had seemed to cast a leaden weight upon his spirit. He recalled a thousand kindnesses that Clarence had done to him; how he had saved his life in battle, saying to him, "Dear brother, live and be a king," and how Clarence, when they slept afield in the hardships of the winter, had wrapped him in his own garments, giving himself all thin and naked to the numbing cold of night. And, indeed, it was not long before King Edward died, stricken with remorse at the cruel fate of his unfortunate brother, caused as he believed by his own rash and groundless anger.

But although Edward and Clarence now were dead as he desired, Richard still could not attain the throne, for many noblemen determined that young Edward should be crowned as king without delay; and there were many that hated Richard bitterly and would have died ere they beheld him on that throne where they had placed his nobler brother.

Chief of Richard's enemies were certain friends of the widowed queen, who would suffer nothing to prevent her son from being king, as was his right. But Richard, by the law that all of England held as sacred, since the rightful king, his nephew, was a child, unfit for many years to take upon himself the cares of state, must rule in place of him as Lord Protector, and this office gave to him a vast power that he could use to destroy all that might oppose him. He plotted many pretexts for the death of the queen's friends, confining them at last in prison, where, on false charges of treason, he caused them to be executed. And Richard made known to certain of his friends, that it was his firm intention to become a king; he promised them rewards of land and money if they aided him, saying his royal favour when he won the crown would ever follow them and make them great above all others in the land; and he promised to Buckingham that when his plans had prospered and the throne was fast in his possession, he would give the duke the earldom of Hereford for his own and all the rich possessions that attended it. Buckingham became his secret spy, and through his means Richard learned the hearts of all the noblemen and contrived to work the downfall of all men that opposed him.

The time was now prepared, so Richard thought, to seize upon the kingdom and gain the throne before his nephew, Edward, should be crowned openly in the presence of the people. But the name of king, Richard believed, would be more firmly won if it were freely offered him — still more if he should feign humility and reluctance to receive it. So Richard bade the Duke of Buckingham to contrive that this be effected and win the people to his cause; to spread abroad dark slanders on the name of Edward; to infer that Edward's children were unlawfully begotten and of humble birth; to speak of Edward's vices, of his prodigality and freedom of nature, until the people would renounce their loyalty to Edward's son. This done, said Richard, he would feign remonstrance at the honour that the people thrust upon him, and would beg them to do right to his nephew who was their lawful heir and ruler. Thus they would believe he had become king by their own choosing.

In the meanwhile Richard's nephews, young Edward and his brother, the little Duke of York, had come to London for the coronation and were given into the care of Richard. And Richard met them with gracious smiles and a simulated affection; he inquired if their journey had wearied them and if they would rest for he had, he said, prepared a chamber for them in the Tower, and he gave them welcome with so kindly a manner, that in the way of children they soon commenced to ply him with a thousand questions, asked if he believed that there were ghosts in that dark tower, and if Julius Cæsar built it as their tutors had told them. And Edward began to talk of what he would do when he became a man and could lead soldiers to the wars, while his brother commenced to play with the jewelled dagger at his uncle's side. When Richard had conducted them to the Tower — a gloomy place to shelter the sweet children he had taken thither — he gave commands that none should approach them save by his own orders, that even the queen herself should be denied to see them and that on no account should they be allowed to pass from out the prison where he had consigned them.

The Duke of Buckingham, who was a clever orator, had made the citizens believe that Richard should be king. The citizens, indeed, cared little who ruled over them, so long as they were left at peace, being weary of the wars that so many years had raged about the crown. They feared also that the country under Edward, who was only a child, would be torn with further bloodshed, as it had been in the time of Henry the Sixth, who was incapable of rule. And a multitude of people with the Mayor of London at their head came to offer their allegiance to Richard.

Richard knew of their approach, and desired to impress them utterly with his unwillingness to take the crown. He answered their demand to see him, by saying that he was engaged in prayer and could not leave the priests with whom he was consulting, and when they insisted that he show himself, he appeared with an open prayer-book in his hand, bidding them pardon him for neglecting them, while Buckingham whispered that the citizens should mark how different was this prince from the late Edward. Richard was not spending his time in idle pleasures, in loose living and dissipation; he was on his knees with holy men at prayer, seeking to benefit his soul. Richard himself said that he had been occupied with his spiritual welfare, far sweeter to him than any earthly matter. And when the people cried that he should be their king, he looked on them with an appearance of reproof, refusing to think of such an offer, however kindly meant, and bidding them turn to Edward, his nephew, who was their rightful lord, more fit for such high state and majesty than he.

The Duke of Buckingham, who had urged the people on to make this request, pretended to be angry at Richard's refusal of such honour. He said that if Richard denied them, Edward even then should not be king for they would plant upon the throne some other who should cause the downfall of the house of York, and he called the citizens to come away for he would entreat no longer with one who seemed both blind and deaf to the best welfare of his country.

But other noblemen begged Richard to call the people back and consent to their proposal lest his country suffer in his refusal, and Richard, who said he was not made of stone, finally agreed to do so, although apparently with great reluctance. He said to the people that as they forced him to this great fortune, if any ever did reproach him with it or accused him of designing to attain the throne his own unwillingness must tell them that he was free and clear from fault. As he was king through no desire of his own but through the true love of his subjects and the choice of the people made at their own free will, he washed his hands, he said, of all the stains and blots that might befall them in his reign.

But Richard now began to think upon his nephews in the Tower and how some factious noblemen in future times if they should weary of his rule might seek to place young Edward on the throne. He thought also of how the dead king had been set at freedom; and how he himself had contrived the escape of his brother Edward, to stir up further conflict and cast the whole land into the confusion of a long and bloody war. If he were to reign in peace, thought Richard, Edward's children must not live to trouble him; and he conceived the shocking purpose of murdering them as he had murdered the Duke of Clarence, their uncle.

Richard took into his confidence the Duke of Buckingham, who had served him ceaselessly, for Buckingham, he thought, would give him aid in the dreadful deed of putting his nephews to death. And he said to Buckingham that he would test him now and learn if his great friendship had indeed been true or nothing but a sham and a deception; if Buckingham were solid gold or merely gilded — fair to the outward view but of less value than he seemed. He concluded that he would contrive his nephews' death, asking the Duke of Buckingham to help him in their murder.

But the Duke of Buckingham, although a wicked man, could not think of such a deed without great horror and reluctance to perform it. And before he should consent to give his aid in this brutal purpose of murdering two children that had harmed no living thing in all their lives and were as innocent as they were fair to look upon, Buckingham determined to find out if Richard would give him the reward that had been promised him. And he spoke to Richard of this promise, saying that as Richard now was king, he desired of him the earldom of Hereford and all the rich estate that was a portion of it. But Richard was very angry that Buckingham had refused even for an instant to consent to his request; he put him off with doubtful words, paying little attention to what was urged upon him. And Buckingham, in mingled rage and horror, fled from the court and prepared to raise a force of soldiers against Richard: for even at that moment, Henry, the young Earl of Richmond, was coming to England with an army to drive Richard from the kingdom and seize the throne.

Richard summoned to him a man whose name was Tyrrel who was a person of such wicked cruelty that he would not hesitate at any ill deed imposed upon him if the reward for performing it were sufficiently great; and Richard acquainted Tyrrel with his purpose, bidding him seek out his nephews in the tower and murder them by any means at his command. He bade him to make haste and remained alone with brooding and bitter thoughts until the news of his nephews' murder should be brought to him.

Tyrrel with some hard-hearted and cruel helpers then sought the children as they slept, locked in each other's arms in tender slumber; and when they beheld these gentle babes, their lips like four red roses on a stalk, their arms girdling one another in a soft embrace, and their breasts scarce stirring with the peaceful breath of their calm sleep, remorse almost turned them from their purpose. But they stifled the two children in the coverings of the bed whereon they lay; and the chaplain of the Tower buried them with haste and secrecy.

But Richard did not gain the safety that he thought to win by this abominable murder, for Henry, the Earl of Richmond, with a mighty army had landed on the English coast and was marching against him. And many nobles fled from Richard to join the army of Henry, who purposed to rid England of the tyrant who controlled it. And Henry possessed a calm and untroubled spirit, feeling sure of victory, while Richard trembled lest his supporters desert him to join with his enemies.

The two armies beheld each other at last near a place called Bosworth Field, and as night came upon them before they could meet in battle, they prepared for an encounter on the following day. Henry cheered his men with encouraging words and bade them have no fear: right and justice were on their side and on the morrow would direct their swords against their enemies. But Richard, although his army was far greater than his adversary's, possessed none of Henry's assurance or certitude of victory, evil doubts and fears besetting him. And he wearied himself in thinking of the morrow's combat, while Henry lay sleeping to refresh his strength against it.

When Richard at last sought to sleep, a strange and terrible event befell him, for in his dreams he beheld the ghosts of all that he had murdered. They passed before him one by one and each one as it passed cried out "despair and die," for that his edgeless sword should fall before the anger of his enemies. First came the shade of Edward whom he stabbed upon the field of battle; Henry the Sixth followed, then the noblemen whom Richard had condemned to death for opposing his designs upon the throne; and his nephews who were stifled in the Tower, and his wife, the lady Ann, whom he had also murdered; and last of all, there came the Duke of Buckingham, whose army had been routed and he himself captured and slain by Richard; and Buckingham, too, cried out that Richard must despair and die: that as he was the last to feel the tyranny of Richard, Richard should think of him in battle, and die at last in terror of his guiltiness. The spirits then departed from his sight, and they entered the tent of Henry, bidding him keep fair hopes upon the morrow for his enemies would all be routed and Richard himself slain.

Richard started from his sleep in utter terror, thinking, in his disordered mind, that he was in the thick of conflict, wounded, and sore pressed by the besieging swords of many enemies. And when he awakened he thanked Heaven that he did but dream and yet, said he, how could one talk of Heaven who was such a bloody villain. He thought that if he died as had been foretold to him in sleep, none would pity him, and that in all his kingdom there would be no feeling save joy that he no longer lived. In his fear and terror, and the sudden burnings of remorse that came upon him he knew not where to turn and blessed the minute when his followers came to his tent as he had ordered, bidding him arise and prepare himself, for that his friends were even at that moment buckling on their armour.

The battle then began between the rival armies. But the troops of Richard fought less bravely than their adversaries and soon were completely overthrown. And Richard himself was slain by the sword of Henry as had been prophesied, and Henry, beholding him lifeless, bade his followers cease their pursuit of the defeated army for the battle was completely won and Richard dead. Henry then became king over the English people who found him a wise and virtuous ruler, in high contrast to the terrible king, Richard, from whom he had delivered them.

THE FAMOUS HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF KING HENRY THE EIGHTH

IN the time of the proud king, Henry the Eighth, there lived in England a priest called Cardinal Wolsey, who became so powerful at court and so close a friend to his royal master that all the noblemen of England could not hope to rival his greatness. But although Wolsey was Henry's dearest adviser with power and influence hardly less than the king's own, he laboured constantly both to get further wealth and honour for himself and to overthrow all men that might oppose him. The schemes that Wolsey wrought against his enemies were no less crafty in design than artfully executed upon them. His wealth was known to be great and he would use it freely to further his own ends, whether to obtain some dignity that he desired, or to bribe the retainers of an enemy to reveal to him their master's secrets. Few were able and still fewer dared oppose his will; and this mighty and ambitious Cardinal became famous not only at home but in foreign countries. Kings and princes sought his favour and contrived with him in the affairs of state, until Wolsey with great pride and arrogance ranked himself the equal of these rulers. At times he would engage in secret dealings with them for his own private advantage, and it was no other then Cardinal Wolsey who arranged the famous meeting known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold, where the king of England and the king of France met on terms of friendship with great splendour, and where the Cardinal, with his enormous wealth, appeared in greater pomp than any other nobleman.

But although Cardinal Wolsey was powerful at court until no man dared to oppose him openly, in secret he was hated by many noblemen who through jealousy or anger at some wrong he had worked upon them desired his ruin. Chief of his enemies was the Duke of Buckingham — a nobleman of a courageous spirit, and well aware of Wolsey's trickery.

The Duke of Buckingham through some means had become aware of one of Wolsey's secrets: that the emperor, Charles, had offered to him a sum of money to persuade King Henry to break the friendly peace that had just been concluded at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Buckingham intended to inform King Henry of the secret dealings of the Cardinal, and tell of his agreement with the emperor: how Wolsey would buy and sell the honour of his country, and how he intended to influence his own king to be false to the treaty so recently concluded with the land of France. And Buckingham alone of all the courtiers treated the great Cardinal with high disdain showing with open plainness that he had no fear of any injury that Wolsey could work upon him, with a reckless disregard of Wolsey's power.

Cardinal Wolsey, however, was not unaware of what Buckingham intended against him, for by gold and promises he had bribed the servants of this duke to act as spies and informers against their own master. By means of truths artfully twisted until they appeared as treason to the king, and by false reports and slanders, the Cardinal had also obtained a number of accusations against Buckingham that must without a question condemn the unfortunate duke to the severest penalty of the law. Having prepared his net, the Cardinal caused Buckingham to be arrested on these charges and brought to trial to answer them: for his accusers had informed the king of prophecies foretelling that Buckingham should rule all England; and how the duke not only had plotted to gain the throne, but had sworn with the deepest oaths to murder Henry himself. And Henry, in great rage, spoke of Buckingham as a giant traitor and consigned him to his trial with the resolve that were he guilty nothing in the land could save him from the doom that even then the Cardinal had prepared against him.

Katharine, the queen of England, was a noble minded and generous lady who perceived too plainly the malicious purpose of Wolsey in seeking the Duke of Buckingham's death. Katharine did all that lay in her power to save the duke, reminding the king that these same accusers had formerly been discharged from his service and bore ill will against their master. And Katharine spoke to the king of a grievous tax the Cardinal had caused to be laid on all the people of the land — desiring in her heart to destroy his power over her husband — bidding the Cardinal himself, who was urging Buckingham's offenses, to speak with charity and justice, even if he must speak against the noble duke who was completely in his power.

But all the efforts of Queen Katharine were to no purpose, for Buckingham was speedily condemned to death by the group of noblemen who sat in judgment upon him; and although he grieved for the cause of his sad fate, having ever born himself as a loyal subject and one that loved his king, he met his end with the utmost bravery and with his last breath assured his friends who accompanied him to the scaffold, of his entire innocence, bidding them and all the people to pray for him as a true subject, now that the last hour of his long and weary life was at hand. The Duke of Buckingham dead, there seemed to be no man who could dispute in any way the high position of Cardinal Wolsey or thwart what he intended.

In accusing the Duke of Buckingham to the king, Cardinal Wolsey plainly perceived the ill will born against him by Queen Katharine, and he determined both as a means of revenge and to increase his own authority to persuade the king, his master, to divorce her. Although Katharine for twenty years had served her husband with the utmost truth and loyalty, becoming through all England the model of a sincere and loving wife, the Cardinal sought to poison the mind of Henry until he should believe his marriage with the gentle lady had been contrary to law. And Henry was prepared to listen to the Cardinal, for Katharine had formerly been wedded to the king's brother and the closeness of this relationship was the means whereby Wolsey cast doubt upon her second marriage and her present state of wedlock with the king.

But another and greater reason that made Henry wish for so cruel a separation from his wife was the secret state of his own affections. A feast had been given by the Cardinal, who was wont to entertain his guests with great liberality, where all the fairest and most noble ladies of the land had been invited. To this feast King Henry with a number of his courtiers went disguised in masks and foreign garments, and Henry had danced with a lady whose rare beauty startled and enchanted him until he wished her to become his queen. On inquiring from his courtiers about her, what was her name and her position the king learned that she was called Anne Bullen, one of the queen's attendants, and her breeding suited well, so he believed, the dignity that he professed to confer upon her. For Henry was determined to wed Anne Bullen and he sought with the utmost of his power to bring about separation from his wife, Katharine, as speedily as possible on this account.

Cardinal Wolsey aided Henry, writing letters to the pope of Rome and not yet aware of the king's secret passion for Anne Bullen, indulging in ambitious plans to win a new and wealthy bride for his royal master.

Katharine at last was summoned before a court of law where it was purposed to divorce her, but when, according to due custom, she was called loudly by name by the court crier, she made no answer to him, but rose and went to Henry where he sat in state; and on her knees she cast herself before him, saying that she desired his right and justice and that he bestow his royal pity upon her. She was, she said, a most poor woman born in another country, with no judge or friend who could protect her in this harsh proceeding, so much undeserved and so unworthily set on foot against her. She asked Henry if she had not always been his true and loyal wife, who strove to do his will and ever feared to kindle his dislike or anger. And she said to him, " My gracious lord, I pray you to remember that for twenty years I have continued in this obedience and have been blest with many children by you. If in this time you can report a single stain upon my honour, a single wrong that I have done against you, in God's name turn me away and shut the door on me with foul contempt! If not, I pray you spare me until I hear from my friends in Spain whose advice and help in my unhappiness I will speedily implore."

Cardinal Wolsey, who had heard the queen's appeal with great attention, said that this might not be allowed her, for learned and reverend fathers had assembled to defend her cause; and the queen replied she had been prepared to weep, but looking on the Cardinal her tears were changed to sparks of fire. It was Wolsey, she said, that had blown this coal between her and the king, and she continued that she utterly abhorred and from her soul refused to hear Cardinal Wolsey judge her, holding him her most malicious foe, and not at all a friend to truth or charity.

When the Cardinal attempted to defend himself (and he had conducted his affairs so craftily that even the king was not aware that he desired this divorce) Katharine would hear no more, but with her followers and attendants left the court, saying that never again would she appear to answer such a summons, which her dignity of queen or, if she might be queen no longer, as the daughter of a noble king prevented her. And Katharine in great sadness retired to her apartments and except in the expression of her grief gave no outward sign that she regarded the cruel measures that had been taken against her. For the court in her refusal to appear pronounced the sentence of divorce upon her and proclaimed that henceforth she must nevermore assume the name of queen or even of the former wife of Henry.

Even before the divorce had been proclaimed, the king had sought to favour the new object of his love, Anne Bullen, who was sorely grieved at the affliction that had befallen her royal mistress. It chanced, however, that even while she was lamenting the misfortune that had overtaken Katharine, a nobleman came to her and informed her of a marvellous change in her own fortunes: for the king, he said, had created her the Marchioness of Pembroke and had added to this honour a large sum of money for the maintenance of her newly acquired rank. It was not long, indeed, before the king exalted her to honours even greater for he married her in secret and awaited only for some fitting time to proclaim her as his queen.

Cardinal Wolsey had not a suspicion that the king had already been wedded to Anne Bullen, but his heart misgave him when he beheld the affection with which Henry regarded her. It would never do, thought Wolsey, for his king to marry so far beneath him, and Wolsey had also chosen a rich bride that he resolved Henry should wed — no other than the Duchess of Alençon, sister to the king of France. Before the separation from Katharine had been granted, Wolsey perceived that the divorce formerly desired by him would now impede his plans, and he sent to the pope a secret letter asking for delay, for he said that he perceived the king to be entangled in his affections to a creature of his court. And Wolsey carefully concealed this act from Henry's knowledge, thoroughly aware that it would awaken his severe displeasure.

But the destiny that had permitted the divorce of the unhappy and innocent queen, Katharine, which had been effected in spite of Wolsey's recent efforts, did not allow him to continue long in his high state of favour, for his letter was intercepted and brought to the attention of King Henry; the king also obtained another paper that aroused him to further anger — and it seemed that justice had caused the Cardinal to work his own undoing, for he had himself given this paper into the king's hands, including it by oversight in a number of state documents. In it was written a complete list of all the Cardinal's wealth and vast possessions, all his secret stores of gold, his land-holdings, houses and moveables, his horses and his silverware, his velvets and his jewels, his costly wines, laces, silks and sumptuous attire — wealth so vast that no one save the king himself should have the right to own it, for such great property showed that the Cardinal had plundered all the country to possess it. Cardinal Wolsey secretly had purposed to become the pope of

Rome and had amassed this property to influence his friends and smooth his path to that great office; and the king in reading these two papers, learned that Wolsey was indeed far greater than he pretended: that while he showed an outward humility in the presence of his sovereign, his heart was full of high and ambitious desires, far removed from the conscience of a priest. And Henry in his anger forgot that while the Cardinal enriched himself, he had laboured intently for his king and striven to perform the royal wishes; that he had ever been affectionate, and, for the most part, loyal, and that his craft and statesmanship had made all England great. The king's high friendship for the Cardinal was turned at a blow to wrath and deep resentment, and he determined to punish Wolsey with the utmost severity.

Never had the thoughts of Cardinal Wolsey flown so high or had he been so vexed at the difficulties that attended his designs as on the day when this misfortune was to befall him. He was planning how his king should wed the princess of France, and he said to himself that he would have no man or woman interfere with his great purpose. What though Anne Bullen were beautiful and virtuous, he exclaimed. There was more in such matters than a fair complexion. And Wolsey also thought of a new rival that had sprung up against him in the person of a lord named Cranmer, who was high in the king's affections — a heretic, one that was a traitor to the church of Rome — and the Cardinal began, according to his custom, to contrive the downfall of this man who had, as he expressed it, crawled into the favour of his king.

Even while Cardinal Wolsey was engaged in these proud thoughts, Henry, accompanied by many noblemen came into his presence, and fixed him with a severe glance, frowning upon him until the Cardinal wondered at the cause of his displeasure; and Henry said ironically that he perceived the Cardinal was full of heavenly thoughts and scarcely could steal time to think of the affairs of earth, but he would ask of him, he said, if he had not become the first man in the state through Henry's favour alone, and if he were not bound to Henry more than to any other for all his greatness. The Cardinal replied that Henry's benefits had been showered upon him daily, for which he could render nothing but his thanks, his prayers to Heaven and his firm loyalty to the king which grew, as he said, more great each day, and ever would until death should put it to an end. Henry answered that he spoke most nobly, calling his lords to witness that the Cardinal had a loyal breast, for they had seen him open it. He then gave to the Cardinal the papers that disclosed his secrets, and left him abruptly, bidding him to read them. And the noblemen who rejoiced in Wolsey's downfall, crowded after the king with smiles and whispers, showing openly their delight and giving free expression to the hostile feelings that so long they had been forced to conceal.

When Wolsey read the papers he perceived that all his high ambitions and his own proud fortunes were at an end, for he knew that he could never hope to win back the favour of the king. And word soon came from Henry that confirmed the worst of the Cardinal's fears, for noblemen returned into his presence demanding him to deliver to them at once the great seal of England, and to confine himself in retirement until he should hear further from the king, his master; and they triumphed over him with such malicious spite, that Wolsey could not long defend himself, and when they left him he seemed as a man in grievous illness, bidding farewell to all his hopes of greatness. He exclaimed upon the wretched state of men like himself who hung on princes' favours for their happiness, and cried out to his own secretary, who showed both wonder and grief to see his lord so changed, that had he but served his God with half the zeal he served his king he would not have been left in his old age naked and defenseless before his enemies. The Cardinal then went to the place of his retirement, whence he was soon summoned into Henry's presence; but the journey in his changed state was more than he could endure, and in an abbey, where he had taken refuge in his illness, he died in great repentance, and his last hours were given up to grief for all the wrongs he had committed in his long and ambitious life.

A fate fully as unhappy as Cardinal Wolsey's now overtook the last of the unfortunates whose ruin he had effected, for the poor, divorced queen, Katharine, also pined away in sorrow at the change that had befallen her. Katharine had a vision in her sleep that gave her to know her end was near at hand, for in a dream she beheld spirits robed in white and clad in garlands who crowned her as one of themselves. Katharine believed this vision prophesied her death which she felt was swiftly approaching her, and she sent to Henry, her former lord, a message of farewell commending to his care her daughter, Mary, and telling him that even though unkindly treated, she still loved him. She bade her women to use her with all respect and strew upon her when she died, white, maiden flowers, that the world might know that she had been a chaste wife to the hour of her death; and thus the life of this unhappy queen came to an end. As for Henry, her death was little regarded by him, for he was proud in the birth of a daughter by the lady who displaced Queen Katharine in his affections; and this child was named Elizabeth who was later to become a great and illustrious ruler over the English people.

THE END

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